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QUIET TALKS

On the Deeper

Meaning of the War

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QUIET TALKS

ON THE DEEPER

Meaning of the War

And Its Relation to Our Lord's Return

BY

S. D. GORDON



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London and Edinburgh

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Preface

THE world is trying to catch its breath. Such an upheaval, in extent and in intensity, has not occurred for centuries, at the least. Thoughtful men have been trying to sense its meaning. An interpretation that is sane, and sufficient to all the facts, has been difficult to get.

The interpretation I have ventured to suggest here came slowly through the long years of the fighting. The teachings of the Bible, with which it is coupled, came more slowly through longer years. It has all been dug out simply to answer my own questions. It is given here in response to strong pressure.

Regarding the teachings of the Bible here I have tried not to express any personal opinion. My task has been simpler. It has been to gather out such passages as seem, *in their first meaning*, to refer to things that clearly have not yet taken place, and so are distinctly future; and then to put them together in what seemed the logical, connected, common-sense order.

I would never have ventured on such a risky thing as seeming to forecast the future, but for a deep and deepening conviction that the interpretation given here is, in the main, accurate. There can be no question of the full depend-

ability of the Word of God throughout. It's wholly a matter of interpretation.

This is the third little book I have ventured to send out about Christ's Return. The studied limitations of each will indicate the distinctive difference of each from the others, and so the definitive scope of the present one. "*Quiet Talks About Our Lord's Return*" is confined to a detailed study of the New Testament teachings on the subject. "*Quiet Talks About the Crowned Christ of the Revelation*" is devoted wholly to a detailed study of the last book of the Bible. "*Quiet Talks on the Deeper Meaning of the War and Its Relation to Our Lord's Return,*" in this division of its contents, is confined to a detailed study of the Old Testament teachings on the subject, *except* enough of a rapid review of the New Testament teachings to adjust the two groups of teachings together, and so get a summary of the teachings of the whole Bible on this subject.

The Scripture quotations are from the Revised Version, except where otherwise noted. Where they vary from the English Revision it is because the American is judged in those particular cases to be more nearly accurate. A number of times I have made free paraphrases so as to express more clearly and fully the *thought* of the language underneath.

S. D. GORDON.

New York City.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN¹

FRANCIS THOMPSON

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown^o Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed
after.

But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
“*All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.*”

¹ The love of God, strong as a father's, tender as a mother's, eager as a lover's, undiscourageable as a true friend's, persistent as God's own only is, is so simply, exquisitely portrayed in this poem of Francis Thompson's that I have obeyed an insistent inner urging in giving it a fresh errand here. God's purpose, that is, Love's purpose, never gives up its eager pursuit of every man, and of the race, and of His ideal for both. And that is the story of this little book on the War and Christ's Return.

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to.
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn: Be sudden; to eve: Be soon—
With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clangèd His chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o'
their feet:—
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
*“Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter
Me.”*

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.

“Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me” (said I) “your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,
Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.”
So it was done:

I in their delicate fellowship was one—

Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.

I knew all the swift importings

On the wilful face of skies;

I knew how the clouds arise,

Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;

All that's born or dies

Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—

With them joyed and was bereaven.

I was heavy with the even,

When she lit her glimmering tapers

Round the day's dead sanctities.

I laughed in the morning's eyes.

I triumphed and *I* saddened with all weather,

Heaven and *I* wept together,

And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart

I laid my own to beat,

And share commingling heat;

But not by that, by that, was eased my human
smart.

In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray
cheek.

For ah! we know not what each other says,

These things and *I*; in sound *I* speak—

Their sound is but their stir, they speak by
silences.

Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;

Let her, if she would owe me,

Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me

The breasts o' her tenderness:

Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
And past those noisèd Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet—
*“Lo! naught contents thee, who content’st
not Me.”*

Naked I wait Thy love’s uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from
me,

And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenceless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o’ the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth, with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,

Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—

Designer infinite!—

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst
limn with it?

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the
dust;

And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, split down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.

Such is; what is to be?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?

I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds

From the hid battlements of Eternity:

Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then

Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash
again;

But not ere him who summoneth

I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;

His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.

Whether man's heart or life it be which yields

Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields

Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit

Comes on at hand the bruit;

That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:

"And is thy earth so marred,

Shattered in shard on shard?"

*Lo, all things fly thee, for thou flyest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught'' (He
said),
"And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come."*

*Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."*

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I

THE WORLD WAR JUST CLOSED

Contrasting German Scenes.

It was early evening of an August day in Nineteen Eleven. We were guests on a friend's estate up in Mecklenburg, about six hours by rail north of Berlin. Nearly a score and a half of family and guests were gathered about the long board in the old dining hall.

The table shone with the best of silver and cut glass and linen. Most of the guests were officers of the German Army. For the annual imperial manœuvres were in action preparatory to the finals in the Kaiser's own presence.

The conversation naturally ran about the strenuous events of the day. And from that it easily drifted to war. There was a marked enthusiasm among the officers for war. Its virtues were extolled, and its great value to society. My wife was quite astonished. She turned to the officer by her side, and her face plainly revealed her attitude, as she said, "Why, you talk as though you *wanted* war."

With the utmost coolness and complaisance he replied, "Of course, that's the only way we have to distinguish ourselves." And my wife stared at him aghast, and tried to assure herself that

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her ears had heard correctly. It was our first close touch with the utter heartlessness and refined brutal selfishness of aggressive Prussian militarism.

We had gone up to Mecklenburg from Blankenburg in Thuringia, in Central Germany, the little town where Froebel started his first kindergarten. Our Mecklenburg host was one of the inner group of leaders in the Blankenburg Conference, which corresponds roughly to Keswick in England and to our own Northfield in Moody's day.

For ten days there had been in attendance on the Conference nearly, if not quite, two thousand persons. They came from all over Germany, with a few from adjacent countries, France and Switzerland, and Austria, and Russia. They ate together at noon at the large common dining tables under the trees, nobility and merchants, middle class and peasants, all together in a fine Christian unity.

And I have never looked into more thoughtful earnest Spirit-lit faces than those that looked up into mine daily, during those ten never-to-be-forgotten days. They belonged to what is called over there the *Gemeinschaft*, that is, the "fellowship" groups, those who had fellowship together with the Lord Jesus.

The German Church seemed to divide into three groups. There were the rationalistic liberals and radicals who were mentally active and aggressive. There were those orthodox in be-

lief, who were perfunctorily proper, and in a deep rut. And then there were the *Gemeinschaft*. These were little groups all over the empire, really converted people, hungry-hearted, some remaining within Church fellowship, and some who had formed independent congregations, as in the Rhine districts.

Those two pictures have lingered tenaciously in my mind all through the war days, the heartlessly ambitious officers unscrupulously bent on their quarry regardless of methods, who represented the ruling dominating classes of the empire. And that democratic group of earnest folk in their fine Christian unity who stood for the small minority.

I was telling an American friend recently of that Blankenburg scene. And he blurted out intensely, "Where *were* all those people during the war?" It's a question I've often asked myself, and as often answered my own question: most of them knew only as much of the war as the strictly-censored, government-controlled newspapers allowed to sift through to them.

Some few who may have sensed the real situation, as I am persuaded some did, doubtless prayed much. For what else could they do? Living under as despotic a régime as ever Metternich devised, or Czar authorized, with prison or the firing squad awaiting protest, what could they do but bide their time and pray?

I have no thought of considering less than it was, or is, the responsibility that rightly belongs

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to the German people. But I certainly have no sympathy with the attempt being made to besmirch the essential character of the German masses because they are German. Things are bad enough without that. The Germans have their own natural characteristics, but they are fully the equals intellectually and in moral discernment of those against whom they fought. That makes their condemnation the greater.

What is *the real meaning* of this war? Such a stupendous event has a meaning. And the thoughtful Christian is concerned to discern clearly just what that essential meaning is. Of course, we're *all* concerned, intensely, intimately, from *every* standpoint. But chiefly the Christian is concerned *because* he is a follower of Christ. And it is of that deeper meaning that I want to talk a bit here.

Jesus was a world man in size. He did not come *to* the Jew, merely. That was only the door. He came *through* the Jew door, but He came *to* a *world*. He did not come to Palestine, simply. That was merely the door-sill. He stepped across the Palestinian door-sill, but He came to a world.

He talked about a world, though humanly He came of a people peculiarly clannish. He lived for a world, He said. And it was for a world He died, He said. And at the last He talked to the inner group of disciples about a world campaign. He was a world man in size and reach and ambition.

And so the true follower of Christ is a world man, in size and outlook and praying and thinking. And so he is intensely concerned about this war because it is a world war, really the *first* world war in actual extent.

It ranks as one of the world's most stupendous events. It ranks with the break-up of the Roman empire by the northern invasion centering in the sacking of Rome by Alaric. It ranks with the checking of the Saracen invasion of Europe at Tours in the eighth century, and with the Reformation, and the Napoleonic campaignings.

For all of these profoundly affected the after-civilization of Europe and the world. The four-years' war has upset the life of the world, industrially, financially, socially, and politically, as has no other equal period of time. And the thoughtful Christian wants to get it placed in his thinking in clear bold true outline.

I have been trying hard for four years to see things as they really are, with no prejudicial colouring in my glasses. It was my privilege to be in the British Isles for a year and a half on an errand for the Master before the war came. It took me from the Scottish Highlands to Cornwall, and to the Isle of Man and Ireland.

I ate at the British board, warmed by their fires, sheltered under their roofs, slept in their beds, and knelt by their family altars. And I love the British people. If you want to know a real homey home, go to a typical English home, and Scottish, and Irish, and Welsh.

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And for something less than a year the same errand took me up and down and across the land of the Germans. I ate their bread and salt, sheltered from storm under their roofs, slept sweetly in their beds, talked by their fires of the deeper things, and knelt with them in prayer. And I came to love the German people. Some of my dearest friends are on that side of the Channel.

There is no homier home than the characteristic Christian German home. And there, too, I learned something of aggressive Prussian militarism, at least enough to hate it with all my soul and to enlist all my powers against it. But I have tried most earnestly to put away the personal side, and to see things as they really are, without partiality or prejudice or wrong passion as far as that is possible.

The Essential Facts.

And I want here to gather up, and get in clear outline *the essential facts* of the war. And in our next talk I want to try to get at a fair comprehensive *interpretation* of those facts.

When the war broke out, we all said thoughtlessly, without much measuring of words, that it was the worst of all wars. And as tense weeks grew into anxious months and into face-wrinkling, hair-whiting years, we found ourselves saying very thoughtfully and measuredly, "The worst war."

It began small but moved fast. The cloud, no

bigger than many another that blew away, grew quickly till all the world's sky was black, and all the world's life sucked into the wild storm. An irresponsible man's quick passionate act, another man's life swiftly ebbed out, little Serbia and giant Austria at outs—then gradually, but swiftly all the world engulfed.

The active belligerents and the non-active include every important nation of West and East, and many smaller ones. It has been easier and quicker to name those technically neutral than those directly engaged. And some of the neutrals have suffered from war conditions far more than some belligerents. Two great national revolutions, the Russian and the German, and three outstanding abdications, in Russia, Germany, and Austria, stand out in the mix-up of revolutions and the toppling of thrones and the falling of crowns.

All six continents have been involved, reckoning Australia as the island-continent. Five of the six have been directly represented on the firing line. Three of the six, Europe, Asia, and Africa, have had their soil ploughed with shell and lead, and wet with precious blood. And a fourth, our own, has been subjected to violence traceable directly to the war, involving many lives and millions of money. All the seas of the planet have been the scene of fighting action.

All the *dominant races* have been involved, Celt and Saxon and Teuton, Latin and Greek and Magyar, Slav and Turk and Mongol, Indian

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and African, and everywhere the Jew, not to attempt to name the minor racial subdivisions and blends. Turbaned Indians, almond-eyed Chinese, dark-hued Africans, bearded Russians and olive-skinned Portuguese, have fought side by side with French and Belgian, British and American.

All the *dominant religions* have been included. Three class as Christian—Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Protestant. Moham-medanism, that strange mixture of Hebraism and heathenism, has been on opposing sides of a conflict for the first time. And those classed as non-Christian or heathen, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Taoism, have been in the lists, not to mention the numerous minor subdivisions and blends religiously.

The Christian has fought the Confucianist, and the Shintoist has fought with the Christian and against him. Catholic has been pitted against Catholic and Greek and Protestant and Brahman. Greek Orthodox has sided with non-Christian and against him. It's been a pitiable mix-up, until the non-Christian world has been wondering about the Christian's claims to higher standards.

The mix-up of forms of government has been curious. Absolute autocracy, and constitutional monarchy have worked with and against democracies. It's been interesting to note that while the autocratic principle has been supposed to strengthen military efficiency, yet it has been

defeated by the democratic. The leader of the Allies, Great Britain, technically a constitutional monarchy, has a form of government that actually responds more quickly to the breath of popular expression than any of the technical republics allied with her.

They used to fight only on the land and the water. But such limitations are quite tame now. It's burrowing under the earth now, and manœuvering under the sea, and battling fiercely in the upper air. And chemistry, that wizard of the sciences, has added a fearsome, hellish, uncanny touch. Napoleon has been quite outdone. His genius and campaigns made the world's military record up to now. But now they are quite left behind; although it is a most striking fact that his strategy and teachings have been the ideal ardently followed on both sides.

And has there been a war exceeding this in the *personal bitterness* shown? Cities have altered the form of their names to escape the contamination of their enemy's language. Royal houses have broken their long time lineage, disowned blood-kinship, and assumed new family names. And citizens and subjects by thousands have changed their names to get away from the hated suggestions of enemy affiliation. Family feuds are the bitterest. The heads of the two leading nations in antagonism are close blood kin.

A peculiarly repulsive phase of the war was the inhuman, demon-like practices of German

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soldiers. They made war, not against men merely, but against the civilization of the nations attacked. The sacredness of womanhood and of chastity, of childhood, and old age, was trampled in the mire with ghoulish glee. The civilized world stood aghast. The commonest decencies of life were ruthlessly disregarded.

Churches were desolated, homes destroyed, manufactories stripped of machinery and levelled, libraries and art galleries looted, bank vaults rifled, populations deported, prisoners put to hideous torture. And all this when no pretense of military necessity could possibly be pleaded. One could not credit the facts were they not so carefully and reliably authenticated. And the evidence constantly grows that it was done deliberately, planned for and initiated by the highest authorities.

It is enough to make Teutonic faces burn with shame for generations to come, aye, human faces, that fellow-humans could sink so low. It may well be doubted if the common masses of Germany knew what was going on. The utter disregard of every moral consideration by the Germans could not have been more marked.

And, if such things could be made yet more loathsome, it was in this that all this was accompanied by the use of pious phraseology. There was the persistent attempt to cloak all that was done under pretense of partnership with God. The shocking blasphemy of religious pretense made even worldly men indignant, and

Christian folk sick at heart. And yet this fits in naturally with the true interpretation of the war, as we shall see later.

One particularly bright light shines clearly out. That was the *personal salvage work* done among the Allied forces. Medical science, and Christian humanitarian effort as represented by the Red Cross, never made such records before for thorough whole-hearted intelligent and successful work, nor the home people in their unparalleled gifts. And the results contributed incalculably to the victory.

And no such service was ever done for the *moral welfare* of the men. It is to the never-to-be-forgotten credit of the Young Men's Christian Association that so promptly, so efficiently, and so acceptably, they threw all the strength of their remarkably organized human machinery into alliance with governmental effort. And others quickly followed their noble lead. It is to be earnestly hoped that the ardour of such work will not dim the eye to the essentials of real Christian service, at once so simple and yet so radical.

And *the cost* of the war! The various experts are still figuring on estimates for restitution. But figures are cold things at the best. The cost *in lives*, blotted out and crippled, runs into many millions. The cost *in coin* runs into billions many times repeated. And the cost *in suffering*—broken hearts and broken homes, wrecked lives, acidly embittered memories, and

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violent setback to civilization—this can never be told in figures nor words.

How *could* neutrality be possible in such a conflict? The technical diplomatic neutrality that some nations wisely adopted for safety's sake has been quite impossible to men personally. In the earnest desire to limit the sphere of the war neutrality was urged upon us Americans, extending even to our thinking. But some of us wondered how it was possible, where a *moral issue* was involved. How could there be neutrality where right and wrong were at stake? If we could make millions out of European trade why couldn't we consistently express our utter national repugnance at the gross immorality of the invasion of our little Belgian brother-nation, even though the technicalities were against such action?

The Causes Apparent and Real.

Let us take a brief look at *the apparent causes* of the war. From the first the German government insisted that they were fighting in defense of their fatherland. The common talk on that side of the Channel for years had been about the menace of English navalism. And the chronic conditions of unrest in the Balkans, and the constant undercurrent of intrigue in European politics, could be easily turned and twisted into an occasion to suit their purpose.

Further, the imperial constitution gave the Kaiser the right to declare war *only in defense*

of the country, not otherwise. So that pretense was held to strenuously. Of course it has long since been exploded into countless fragments, even on the banks of the Rhine and the Spree.

Great Britain entered the war apparently and technically because the neutrality of Belgium had been violated. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 had tied Holland and Belgium up together regardless of racial and religious and language differences. The insistence of Belgium on living her own national life had been approved by the Conference of London in 1831.

And the five other nations immediately concerned, France, England, Austria, Russia and Prussia, had solemnly pledged themselves to observe strictly her neutral status. Her territory was to be respected, and not invaded. Germany admitted that she had deliberately and brutally broken her pledge to suit her purpose. Technically, Belgium was defending her neutrality, and England was keeping her treaty pledge.

But one doesn't need to scratch the surface much to get at *the real cause* underlying these. Look first at the real cause on *the German side*. And here one is saved the trouble of expressing any personal judgment on the facts in the case. It is enough simply to quote a German, a German scholar and historian, Treitschke, dead some eighteen years before the war began.

If the war finds embodiment in any one as its real genius and its deepest inspiration, it is not

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in the Kaiser nor von Moltke, not Hindenburg nor Tirpitz nor Ludendorf, guilty and responsible as these men are. It was in this man Treitschke, whose intense spirit and genius lived again in the war.

Heinrich von Treitschke was born in Saxony, a blend of Slav and Teuton blood. He was tall, with a strong, fine face, straight black hair, and keen, dark, thoughtful eyes. His voice was harsh, due doubtless to his being stone-deaf from a childhood sickness. His speech was intense and abrupt, and marked with an unmistakable Saxon accent.

When he lectured, as he did every winter at the Berlin University for years, his lecture hall was packed. All classes eagerly came, and hungrily listened through his long lectures. Royalty and nobility, officers and merchants and tradesmen, jostled elbows democratically and good-naturedly to hear this intense Saxon advocate of Prussian supremacy.

I need quote only a few sentences from his lips, quoting freely. They will sound blunt and even brutal in English but not as terse and blunt as in his own Saxon-accented German, made more emphatic by his harsh voice. He would say repeatedly, "England has stolen a fourth to a third of the surface of the earth." He hated England bitterly, and made no bones of his hatred. "We had as good a right to it as she," he would say.

"We ought to have taken it. We ought to go

and take it. We must do it. For the world's good, we must take it. We are the world's natural leaders." Year in, and year out, for over twenty years Treitschke dinned this into German ears, with all the burning intensity of his intense spirit. The real cause of the war cannot be stated so well and so briefly as in this German's own words.

On the other side, England was fighting for her world-leadership and for her life, her free national life. And right well the English leaders knew it. The attack on Paris through Belgium was an attack aimed at the heart of London. And, instantly, the astute statesmen of London so recognized it. It is said that the common remark of the inner German circle had been, with variations, "Three weeks to Paris; three months to London; three years to New York!"

Great Britain has been the world's leader for generations. In high ideals of civilization insisted upon, in world movement, in trade, in prompt vigorous action when action was needed, she has been recognized as the world's earnest, insistent, aggressive leader. It has been a growing world leadership since the new world life opened up.

The venturesome Spaniard who discovered the American Continent did far more. He opened the doors of a new world life. The center of trade that had swirled about the Mediterranean swung to the Atlantic, and then slowly to the

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Pacific. There came a new world consciousness, slowly and yet really swiftly.

Trade pushed out of the Gibraltar Straits across the Atlantic. And, from the first, Great Britain forged to the front as world leader, not merely in trade, but in ideals. Now Britain was fighting for her world leadership. She poured out blood and coin for her ideals and for her life.

It is of intensest interest to analyze the victory that has come. It is of real value, immense value, to recognize clearly *just how victory came*. England's instant recognition of the challenge to France as meant for herself was the first step of the victory that came so long after. The quick-as-a-flash sensing of the whole situation by the clear-visioned leaders of London was the first serious disturbance that threatened the German plans.

Earnestly, patiently, even pleadingly, British diplomacy did its best, its sheer utmost best, to avert war. But all efforts were stubbornly repulsed and balked. It became clear that war was determined upon. Then, sharp, quick, the decision was made to ally England with France and make their cause one. This must rank first in the analysis of victory.

Three times in three hundred years England had led in checking the power of tyranny that threatened to overrun Europe. In the end of the Sixteenth Century Philip II of Spain had caught the fever of world-dominion that has

afflicted kings so much. And it was English pluck, under the leadership of Howard and the daring Drake that gave him the blow from which he never recovered.

And Spain's attack on the liberties of Europe, both religious and political, was disposed of for good and all. And English recognition of God's gracious help in the disastrous storm that meant so much, was perpetuated in the coins struck off by Elizabeth, with the inscription, "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them."

A little more than a hundred years later, in the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, when Louis XIV, grown fat in his arrogance, made the same attempt, it was the Grand Alliance under England's Marlborough that decisively settled Louis at Blenheim, and secured Europe's free life for another century.

A hundred and one years later Napoleon's fever-bitten ambition was settled satisfactorily for Europe *so far as the water was concerned*, by Nelson at Trafalgar. And a decade later he was finally disposed of *on land* by the Alliance under Wellington at Waterloo.

And now a fourth attempt was made, a hundred years after Waterloo. It is interesting to notice that it seems to take about a hundred years for these attempts to come to a head, so far. And America and all the world has to thank God that England's sense of honour and her keen, quick sensing of the real situation led to

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such prompt action, and in time to such decisive victory.

But little Belgium, brave little Belgium, must be given the hero-place. Her rare courage in putting honour first, and daring, actually daring to resist the greatest army ever gathered, and in the full flush of its bold initiative, gives her the hero-place. Her boldness gave Germany a check that thwarted her in the thing most vital to her plans, namely, lightning speed of movement, a check from which she never recovered.

And France, outnumbered from the first, bled white, dripping red at every pore, never flinched. Two generations of her sons had been taught to expect just such an attack. And when it came France, spoken of commonly as giddy and pleasure-loving, made a new record among the nations for courage, sheer strength of spirit that refused to be whipped, against tremendous odds insisted on refusing to give up.

And our own United States had a big share in the victory. We were a bit slow and late. Three thousand miles of isolating brine had cut us off from European politics. Our clocks ran a bit late by European schedules. Subtle German intrigue had slowed the governmental wheels in all allied countries to an extent that may never be fully known.

If strong words, chosen with rare aptness, had been matched by strong deeds as promptly done, a lot could doubtless have been saved of time and blood and suffering. But that's past now.

Let it go. We did come in at last. And when we did we came with a rush, full speed, American style. American numbers and American gold, American manhood and American intensity at its intensest, came in, and came in just in the nick of time.

The Decisive Factors in the Victory.

The decisive factors in the victory are worth noting carefully. The first factor to be named is *the British Navy*. It didn't have to get ready. It *was* ready. It always is. Silent, non-blustering, prompt, efficient, almost painfully modest, at times, in statements of its own achievements, it went to work instantly.

The seas of the world were swept clean of enemy efforts, with sporadic exceptions. Even that new venomous devil-fish of the seas, the submarine, was being choked slowly but surely before the end came on land. One wonders that more has not been said about the victory of the seas running through those first years. It was almost a bloodless victory before the submarine began its work.

The British Navy cleared the seas of the world, effectually blocked German ports, cut Germany's cable communications, and kept the German fleet tied up in her harbours. The one exception, when that fleet *did* come out and then made a record run back, emphasizes the statement. The British Navy was a wall of fire round about the American nation and continent from the

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first. And when we came in with our splendid millions of splendid men, that navy was the chief factor in getting our men to their job. We could never have done what we did without the English boats. The various statements run around two-thirds as to the number of our men carried over in British bottoms to the scene of action.

Coming closer to the day of decision, there are three factors together that stand out as decisive,—unified effort, Foch, and the American men. The little Welsh giant-premier of the British empire had the genius to see that the allied effort *must* be unified. He had the daring to put British men and officers under French orders, though it took rare courage and insistence to get it done. Absolute unity of effort, men of different nations intermingled till the armies were one army in effect—*this* was the keystone of the arch that no German General Staff could budge.

Then Foch was put in command of that unified army. One brain dominated all. And such a brain! And, yet more, such a spirit! Such intensity of spirit threatening its slender tenement by the fierceness of its flame. And then the American men, eager, fresh, daring, under able, fearless command, were put in the crisis place of the fighting, and at the crisis time.

And chief of the three was Foch. Back of Foch the Generalissimo was Foch the *man*. In his teens he had witnessed the humiliation of

his country at Sedan. And then it was that he began praying and began training, that some day that wrong should be righted. His life was one long preparation.

Sixty-six years were packed into a few months. A lifetime was spent in getting ready for final events packed into less than a third of a year. Hard work, unsparing discipline, ceaseless study, thorough thinking, earnest praying, and an unconquerable spirit, all under a masterful will, and brought to white heat when and where needed, and the steel-hard opposition was forced to melt away.

His books on strategy had been translated into German a generation ago, and pored over and criticized, studied and analyzed, and *mastered*, it was supposed. Then the Prussians had a taste of the man. And they found the man more than his books. They mastered the books, but were mastered by the man.

It is of intensest interest to mark Foch's part in the war from the very first. The German plan of action is now quite clear. Breaking through Belgium and Luxumburg like a whirlwind, their Left drove due south, planning a vast encircling movement that would bag the whole French Army and capture Paris. Bold enough, surely.

But its success depended on every part working. Belgium was the first serious check. Golden time was lost there. And Foch was in command in the south, in French Lorraine, and

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first held and then defeated the German Left. That was a serious blow. The whole German movement was imperilled. Then it was Foch that was sent, by Joffre's genius, to the critical place in the First Marne. And again he gave the Germans a stinging defeat. It was the second serious blow in France.

Then the Germans made their drive toward the Channel ports. And again it was Foch, under Joffre's orders, driving hard all night long to get in touch with the British command, that by reinforcements and more, by sheer force of spirit, checked the enemy at the first great battle of Ypres. The enemy had reason to fear Foch from the beginning. They made his acquaintance at the very start. That final victory was piled on top of others, dating from the very first month of the war.

The Biggest Factor.

But the chief thing in Foch hasn't yet been mentioned. He is a man who *prays*. This is the tap-root underlying and fertilizing all the rest. Behind his life of discipline and study is his keen, fertile brain. Back of his brain, his spirit, indomitable, unbreakable. Back of his spirit is his touch of heart, reverent, habitual, intelligent, with God.

A young Californian soldier has given a picture which he has enshrined in memory as one of the most precious of his life. One day, somewhere in France, he made use of his off-duty

leisure to look around the little French town where he was billeted. He went into the old church.

As he stood bareheaded respectfully looking, a small, slender, gray-haired man entered, with the insignia of a general on his shabby uniform. He was accompanied by an orderly. The young man didn't think of him especially at first, but then noted curiously that he went forward and knelt in prayer. He waited. Fully three-quarters of an hour passed.

Then the small man rose from his knees and slipped quietly out to the street. The young soldier followed, and was startled to see soldiers excitedly saluting, and women and children stopping to stare with awestruck faces. It was Foch. And this is said to be his constant habit. He begins and ends his day with quiet, unhurried prayer. And he commonly slips into a church wherever he is for the quiet prayer there.

Ah! This gives the final factor, the undermost thing in these decisive factors, and working through them. Back of Foch, back of unified effort, back of Lloyd George insisting on the united move, was *God!* I am not dealing with the significance of the war here. That follows. Only with the factors. And without doubt this factor, God, the real God, counts and weighs biggest.

From the first abrupt break over the Belgian boundary, it has been recognized that prayer

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has been a great factor. The praying spirit and attitude of Allied generals and leaders have been much spoken of. In October, 1914, when news was brought to Kitchener that Joffre was doing what seemed humanly impossible, actually holding the Germans at the Marne, he is said to have exclaimed reverently, "Somebody's been praying."

That first, tense, tremendous year brought some bits from the battle-field that some of us like to remember still. The story of "the Angels of Mons" has been criticized a good deal. And it is quite possible that it may have grown as it passed from mouth to lip.

But certain things about it stand, and stand out clear and unmistakable. Something happened that touched and awed and inspired common soldiers sheer outnumbered, without a chance, to resist, and stand, and fight, and turn the tide of action. And it was a something not scheduled in the usual fighting schedule.

It was a something that changed the men who witnessed it, and affected their lives. A thin, wavering, then broken, line rallied and held against vastly superior numbers. Those men believed it was some sort of divine interposition. It was in the first crisis when the enemy movement was intensest and the Allies the least ready.

Some of us like to recall the stories of "The Comrade in White." They, too, came in those first terrific crisis days. It was the French soldiers that made the simple phrase. It was said

that Christ Himself came to minister to wounded men, clad in white. Those who had seen Him were quite sure.

The others, skeptical, ridiculing, were just as sure it couldn't be. The men were out of their heads. It was one of these skeptical men who tells of being wounded, and having fallen, bleeding badly. He saw a man in white approaching, and supposed he was one of the hospital corps.

Then he was greatly startled to notice that the bullets that rained thick didn't affect this Man. He came on through them. The man couldn't believe his eyes. Then the Man in white was helping him to an easier position. Then the loss of blood stole away the soldier's consciousness. When he came to, the Other was still there. They exchanged a few simple words.

A sense of awe held him, and yet there was no sense of fear, but a quiet peace. He noticed a wound in the Man's hand, and said, "You have been wounded, too." And the Other replied, with a breathed sigh, "That's an old wound, but it has been torn open afresh."

You do as you like with such incidents. They impress me, not so much as chief evidence at all, but as *colouring* that fits in perfectly, and fills out naturally, the picture whose outline is reached in quite another way.

Such in brief are the facts, some of them in mere outline. The interpretation which is the chief thing we are concerned with now will come in our next talk.

II

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WAR

Getting Your Footing.

“IF there’s a God, *where is He?*” That tense question was asked me by a friend, a war correspondent. He stands high in his profession, his name appearing with his dispatches. He has seen service on nearly every battle-front of the war, if not actually all.

From my personal acquaintance with him, it did not seem to me like a critical skeptical question, doubting the existence of God. It was rather the earnest question of an honest man, puzzled over the events with which he came into such close, painful touch. His letter spoke of the siege days in Antwerp when the Belgians’ beseeching prayers filled the churches. And then the sharp contrast when his errand took him into South Germany where he heard the people in the churches thanking God for German victory. The question was wrung out by the experiences and sights he went through.

That question has been asked no end of times, asked in sorest suffering, in dire extremity, in puzzled perplexity, and in cynical skepticism. Certainly the war has seemed an unanswerable

puzzle to many earnest religious folk. The questions have come thick and fast.

"Has Christianity broken down?" they ask. Individually it certainly has *not* broken down. Thousands in the thick of the fighting have given that answer. Certainly in principle, and in the power known by countless numbers, the answer is an emphatic "*No.*" Yet, there's more to say here. There's a painful "*yes*" that insists on coming.

Christianity *has* broken down, or, at least, something has broken down that bore that label in large capitals. Certainly there was not enough of the real article *in* Central Europe to prevent the hellish outbreak. And there wasn't enough *outside* to keep it from breaking out. The salt in common use had lost its saltiness. It didn't keep things healthful. The common conventional type of Christianity certainly has broken down. And it is a bad breakdown, too.

The real thing hasn't broken down, for a very good reason: *it hasn't been tried*. I mean, of course, commonly in the practical conduct of national affairs. Christ hasn't broken down. He hasn't really got in yet. And that is not expressing a critical personal experience. It is simply repeating a commonplace of Europe.

The chancellories of Europe have been Machiavellian in their policies and manœuvres and intrigues for generations, confessedly so. The Florentine statesman has given his name to the unscrupulous, unprincipled statescraft, des-

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titute of moral quality, that puts expediency and success above right.

“Why does God permit it, with so much suffering by the innocent?” has been asked. Others have pointed to the personal blessings that have come to so many who under stress of imminent battle have decided for Christ. Yet on the other hand many have gone into rankest cynicism and skepticism.

Much space has been given to certain good results. The countless instances of bravery, the heroic deeds, the self-forgetful sacrifices, the utter abandon of all thought of self in the tense action and tireless work both in the armies and outside, all this sort of thing, so thoroughly and only admirable, has got marked emphasis in some quarters as being a sufficient good to justify the catastrophe having been permitted. War has even been exploited as valuable because it *does* arouse the heroic.

Yet surely it becomes clear that it was not war, but the *terrific emergency* made by war that brought out these good results. The daring that throttles a mad dog, or stops a wild runaway horse, doesn't usually call out praise of such dogs and horses, but only of the splendid courage of the man who met the emergency at the risk of his own life.

The emergency of being attacked did bring out most noble traits. All praise to those who threw themselves passionately into the breach. There is only contempt or pity for those who would not

meet such an emergency in whatever way their conscience permitted. The emergency was so plain, and the call so imperative. Yet commonplace daily life is chock full of *moral* emergencies, never discerned, or, if noticed, calmly disregarded.

And the wild vagaries of prophetic teachings of which the press has been so full have been enough to make the average sane man forever give all prophecy a wide berth, except where he may have had an inkling of some poised prophetic teaching.

It's been a time of confusion, earnest bewilderment as to *why*? Clear simple analytical thinking and teaching have been at a very high premium, hard for common folk to get. And yet prayerful study has slowly made some things stand out clear and sharp.

There's a bunch of *nots* that may help unravel the knotty puzzle. Perhaps it's hardly needful now to say that it was *not* Armageddon, though that question came so frequently. Armageddon has been used rhetorically for any great decisive moral conflict. It is used once in Scripture for the final battle between good and evil, God and Satan. Clearly this was not that.

It is *not* a fulfilment of any particular prophecy. That is quite unmistakably clear. The general trend and characteristics of the age are indicated in certain prophetic sayings. But that is the most that can be said there. We are

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living in the prophetic gap. The thread of unfulfilled prophecy is not picked up again *until the Jew is renationalized*.

It clearly has *not* been God acting in judgment on the so-called Christian nations for their lukewarmness, and so on. God is not acting in judgment at present, happily for us all. The day of gracious opportunity is being patiently lengthened out. And it has *not* been God acting to cleanse His Church, except as it may be truly said that all emergencies and sore experiences are *opportunities* for those who will accept them as doors into a purer, stronger life.

And it should be said very clearly and thoughtfully that it is *not* a part of God's plan. Indeed it has been dead set against God's plan. It has been only heart-breaking to Him. God never needs bad to get His good done. He never uses bad. Good never comes out of bad. Though the emergency may call out the good *in spite of the bad*.

And there is one other "not" to put in the group, unhappily, though it pains one to be compelled to do it. It is *not* the last war, if the old Book of God is trustworthy.

The Sovereignty of Man.

But negatives are only half an answer, and sometimes a very tantalizing half. Isn't there more? Yes, there are some things quite clear and unmistakable *on the positive side*. The whole case can be stated fully in one simple sentence. *The*

war was the result of man's use of his freedom of choice and action.

It should never be forgotten that the initiative of action on the earth is in human hands. That has been a primary, dominant law of human life on the earth since Eden. God is very bold. Man is daring. The devil is daring. God is more daring than either, or both. He is so daring as to have made an experiment, a daring experiment, the greatest experiment ever made. An experiment is putting certain principles to the test of experience. The experiment, if successful, is an exposition and vindication of the principles. In this case the experiment is to vindicate both God and man, the true man.

God made man in His own image. That is, He made him free, wholly, absolutely free, to choose and act as he would. And He never infringes on that utter actual freedom by so much as the half-blinking of an eyelash or a third the width of a narrow hair.

God is a sovereign. Man is a sovereign—in the realm of his will. There he sits in imperial solitude choosing to do as he chooses. In this he is like God. It is the God-image. He is like God in the right of choice even when he is most unlike Him in the way he uses his right.

This is fundamental. God has pledged Himself to this. And when things go wrong, He uses His strength to restrain Himself from interfering, that so He may preserve to man that

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rarest gift. Love is sometimes strongest in its restraints. It reveals itself most in patience, feeling to the hurting-point but yet waiting.

Could God have stopped the war? Yes, quicker than you can think, so far as mere power is concerned. But there is one thing greater than God's power—*His love*. Some of us need to revise our ideas of love. It is a pure, strong, intelligent, sensitive, *controlling* passion.

God *could* have stopped the carnage and suffering. But, for love's sake, He wouldn't, and He didn't. It would have been infringing on man's highest power, his free choice and action. There is abundant evidence that He went just as far as He could—to the very edge—to help, without that infringement. He helped only through human channels.

The sailor must have a compass, and an anchor: the compass to steer by in an open sea, the anchor to steady by in the shallows. If he hasn't them, he drifts badly, and maybe worse, he may lose boat and life. We need compass and anchor to steer and steady by. For the sea of life is rough any time, and awfully rough sometimes.

The anchor to steady by is—*God's love*. His love is above suspicion. It is unfailing. Never allow yourself to question it in any fog or storm or swamp. This is the one anchor that holds, the only one.

And the compass to steer by, out on the sea, out of sight of land, in the tangle and confusion

of storm and action, what's that? This: *man's free choice and action*, given by God, never taken back, guarded by Him reverently, the very image of Himself. With that anchor and that compass, used, studied, a man can ride any storm, and is sure of safe port for both brain and heart.

This is God's world. But things aren't going God's way in it, that is, things, many things, that grow out of man's leadership and initiative. Things are going *man's* way. And that's the plan. Only man's way and God's were meant to be the same. The likeness was to be seen in their being the same. But they're not. Man has been using his free action in swinging away from the true way, the original way.

God's sovereignty, rightly understood, doesn't mean that God is having His way. And it doesn't mean that the way things are going is as He planned and plans. It does mean simply this: that before the game's done things will be righted.

There is a very common idea of God that He drives His will through by sheer force regardless of opposition. If you happen to get in the way of His will, so much the worse for you. That's the commonplace in the non-Christian world. And it's remarkable how much sway it has consciously or unconsciously among Christian people, even the inner circle.

God's sovereignty, His rule in the world as God, simply means, *at present*, this: that through

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the intricate network of human wills, God is working. He is preventing a disastrous smash-up that would be a wind-up. He is constantly wooing, shaping, restraining, steadying. It means, further, that, in the long run, His will of love will be recognized and done.

Some day the lead of earth action, racial action, will swing from man's hands to God's. Yet even then there will be no infringement on man's *individual* freedom of choice and action. No, I must change that sentence about the lead leaving human hands. It won't. It'll be in the Lord Jesus' hands, the one true, full, really human human.

But *at the present time* man is the leader in the action of earth. God is the Helper. We decide and act. He stands ready to help us in our action when it's right. With utmost reverence be it said, *God waits on man*. He does it deliberately. That is His plan. The present is man's opportunity.

And God means it shall not be skimped, but had to the full, clear to the tip-edge. He woos. He guides. He puts new strength in the human will that must decide, and does decide. His Holy Spirit guides our mental processes. He stiffens our will when it chooses the right in face of a stiff fight.

God gave man a start. Eden was the start. The simple Eden picture holds in it the model or pattern of strong true life. It was a good start. It couldn't have been better. And at certain

great turning-points He has given a fresh start, indicating the true way.

God chose a nation to be, not only His messenger to the others, but to be that messenger *chiefly* in the way it *lived* and *did things*. When that nation, not yet formed as a nation, was leaving Egypt's slavery, God gave a model of action regarding war, *defensive* war.

They were attacked by Pharaoh's forces. The attack was overcome. The Egyptian militarists were overwhelmed. But it wasn't done by physical force. Force attacked, but force didn't defend. The defeat was by direct divine intervention. The leadership was human. The strategy used was daring. Moses went forward as he was advised to do. Through that human initiative God helped.

That was the model of action as the new nation started off on its career. But when the Amalek attack came, Moses didn't follow that model. He worked on another level. And God helped him on the level he chose. The same thing happened again at another turning-point, the entrance into their national domain. God gave Joshua the model of action for taking Canaan. The first city, Jericho, was taken by supernatural power alone, acting through the human initiative suggested to Joshua by God. Then Joshua dropped to the Moses level.

This is one reason why Jesus came, and why He came *as* He came, on the *human* level. And He refused to be budged from that human level,

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in the subtle temptation of the Wilderness, and throughout. He was giving us a great fresh start. He was in Himself a living out of what *could* be done on *the human level* as originally planned.

He repelled force without ever using force. And then He died, *partly*, to release new power for us. So we could do as He did, keep on the human level, keep sane, take the lead as we were meant to do, and have the power to reach the pattern He set anew.

So in our personal lives to-day. Light is turned on the path, clear, simple light, soft, divine light. It shines noiselessly, unobtrusively, yet always clearly. And it may be *always recognized*, though perhaps almost unconsciously. And there's always strength given to walk in the light that's given. If we step out and walk in the light and according to it, more light comes, further light, light on the next step. And with light unfailingly comes the strength to walk in it. And so on to the full noon of light and the full flood of strength.

Satan's Latest Attempt.

But now I want to turn from this common law of action to the concrete burning question of this war, and its significance. It can be said thoughtfully that the war has *a threefold significance*. And first of all comes this: *it was Satan's latest attempt to work out his ambition on the earth.*

Satan is ambitious to rule the earth and be worshipped by man. The single case of the third temptation in the Wilderness (put second in the Luke account), will serve as a key to the long chain of related passages. But, be it keenly marked, he can do it *only through human consent*.

For man was made undermaster of the earth. Man's freedom of choice was Satan's one opportunity. How daring God was in giving man that great gift! But His love was pledged in the giving of it to help man be true in it. The Eden temptation, like that of the Wilderness, throws an intense lime-light here. Satan *can do nothing* without man's yes.

There's a significant passage near the beginning of this old Book of God. It's really a key passage unlocking doors and problems all the way through the Book and through life. It's the bit about the attack of Amalek on Israel shortly after the departure from Egypt.¹

Amalek attacked. Under Moses' instructions, Joshua organized the defense. Moses prayed. It was a hard battle, swinging now this way, now that. But victory came with the setting sun, for the man who prayed. At the close comes *the interpretation*. The last sentence reads commonly, "Jehovah hath sworn: Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

That reading is got by the translators chang-

¹ Exodus 17: 8-16.

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ing one letter in the Hebrew text to bring out the supposed meaning. The reading of the text underneath as it actually stands, without this change, is given in the margin of both revised versions, English and American. It is this: "*a hand (is lifted up) upon (or against) the throne of God.*"

That is to say, there was a conflict on in the unseen spirit world. It was regarding something on the earth. The battle in Rephidim was a manifestation or result of the spirit conflict. There was actually an attempt being made against God's rule in the earth. How bold! How blasphemously daring!

Israel and Amalek were as pawns on the earth chess-board. The great fallen prince was attacking behind and through Amalek. In this attack on Israel, he was attacking God. He was attacking God's plan for the race, that is to say, he was attacking the nation through which would come the Man who was to be the world's Saviour and King.

And that warfare, it is said here, would be renewed generation after generation. The blasphemous attempt would be repeated. It has been repeated many times. And as one thinks into the war just closed, it becomes clear and clearer, and then *quite* clear, that it is the latest renewal of that old conflict.

Germany, the leader of the Central Powers, is the modern Amalek through which Satan was renewing his old ambitious attempt. The blas-

phemous pretensions of the Kaiser, the bold disregard of moral consideration and obligations, the lawlessness practised to the utmost extreme possible, on sea and land, and actually gloried in, the horribly repulsive inhuman demoniacal practices deliberately planned and heartlessly driven through, all this fits naturally in. They become telltale marks. The origin can be readily identified. The Satanic finger-prints are unmistakable.

Satan always uses a human doorway in his activities on earth. Any one must. Even God used a human door. He sent His Only Begotten as a *man*. That first law, the law of man's under-mastery and leadership, stands. It is at the bottom of all action, Satanic and divine.

The Scripture has some plain teaching regarding Satan's ambitions and plans. There's a man coming some day who will be Satan's man. He will be Satan's Jesus. That is, he will personify and stand for Satan as perfectly as Jesus personified and stood for God. Paul calls him "the lawless one," and John, "the Antichrist." When Satan succeeds in getting that man then his supreme effort will be made to get control.

Some of his previous attempts at this are familiar. There's a long chain of them running through history. The unholy itch of tyrannical world dominion by sheer brute force has afflicted world rulers through the ages. The story is a familiar one, running through the Pharaohs

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of Egypt, and the outstanding Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman monarchs.

We don't hear much now of Jenghiz Khan the Chinese Emperor of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. But his vicious swing westward over all northern Asia, Persia, Armenia, part of Asia Minor, and Russia, threatened to "deluge Christendom." The earlier Hun attempt under Attila, in the Fifth Century, is more familiar.

The Arab-Mohammedan move made savage inroads into the southeastern corner of Europe. Its aggressive attempts, later, in the other corner of Europe, the southwestern, up through Spain, in the Eighth Century, met its death-blow in France, at Chalons, happily for Christendom.

The later attempts of Spain heading up in Philip II, and of France under Louis of the record reign and record egotistical pretensions, are well known. And it is only a little over a hundred years since Napoleon ran amuck over Europe with such rare ability and aggressiveness and success till he was finally disposed of.

As one traces these names and attempts he finds one identifying mark in all that links them together. That is, the lawlessness, ruthlessness, deceit, lack of moral qualities, repulsive inhumanities, and magnifying of sheer brute force to the highest place. This reveals the common source. Devilish qualities reveal the devil's activities. And especially when so unmistak-

ably marked. This latest attempt has all the telltale marks. The bloody footprints are beyond dispute.

The common explanation in historical study is quite accurate so far as it goes. It *was* the tyrannously autocratic principle in government seeking to assert its dominance over mankind. And we enjoy tracing the slow victory of the democratic principle, rule of men by brother men as brothers. It's a pleasure to read of another sort of king in the pages of history, such as Louis the Ninth, and Alfred the Great, who devoted themselves unselfishly and tirelessly to the welfare of their people.

This latest Satanic attempt was very deliberate. It took time. It involved a whole nation, or rather a race—the German race. Its beginnings really run back to the Napoleon overthrow. The seeds of the plan of general conscription followed were planted under cover, deceitfully, even before Napoleon was done for. The real vigour dates from Bismarck's rise to power, Bismarck the successor of Metternich as the reactionary apostle of Europe.

The present generation of Germans have been under training from before birth. The nation has been obsessed or possessed with the demon of force. And the Kaiser, the head of the system, fully embodied in himself the spirit of the Antichrist as pictured in the Scripture—lawlessness, ruthlessness, shamelessness, and self-assertive ambition, wholly Satanic in its spirit

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and methods. If he were possessed by an evil spirit the practices he authorized would not have been different, and could have been worse only in extent, and degree, not in kind.

As this interpretation became clear during the progress of the war it made one other thing quite clear too, that was the outcome. It was perceived that the Germans *could* not win. The time wasn't yet ripe. The stage wasn't yet set for the final attempt. The keystone of the arch of events was not in place. The Jew was not yet back and renationalized.

A Question of Levels.

This leads up to the question: *Can a Christian fight?* Well, it all depends on *where* the Christian is in his Christian life, whether he is on the *Moses level*, or on another level. The Moses level of action in war is to use force thoughtfully and prayerfully *in defense*, when attacked. It is fighting force with force, defensively, in dependence on divine help.

All the warfare of the Israelites, from the beginning on through the whole record, is on the Moses level, with four exceptions. These exceptions are Pharaoh's attack at the Red Sea, Joshua's taking of Jericho, the attack by Moab and Ammon during Jehoshaphat's reign, and the attack by Sennacherib of Assyria in Hezekiah's time. In each of these instances there was victory, by divine intervention, without the use of force by the Israelites. In the first two the

action was by divine initiative, in the second two by human initiative.

Indeed in such a conflict as this the Christian *must* take a stand because he is a Christian. For it is a conflict between God and Satan; wholly a moral issue at stake. This indicates the absolute necessity of an accurate interpretation of the war, a clear outlining of the issue at stake. In such a war as this one must take sides. To be neutral is to fail God. It is to be wrong. This was the curse pronounced against Meroz.¹ They failed to take a stand in God's battle.

The real conscientious objector must line up. Whether all others do or not *he must*. That is, if his objections are based on Biblical grounds. And there are none other except those so based, directly or indirectly. And if he doesn't actually fight, as, of course, he cannot if it be really a matter of conscience, he is under increased, greatly increased, obligations to do something else.

And it is a something else of a very vital and positive and practical sort. And that is this, to live such a pure strong life that his mere presence on the earth is a positive factor against evil, so recognized in the spirit realm. And he must put the positive force of that life into prayer, until the issue is decided.

And a man so doing will find clear leading step by step in the circumstances that come to him. He will be given wisdom to conduct him-

¹Judges 5:23.

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self in a really Christlike spirit. And he will be delivered from the one thing objected to, the actual use of armed force against any person.

There is a higher level, God's level. It is clearly illustrated in the four exceptional engagements just named. It is further illustrated in Jesus' life. He insisted on living His life on the human level. He was repeatedly attacked. And He repelled the attack in each case without physical force, until He deliberately yielded to His enemies at the last.

It is quite clear that there was no physical force used in the cleansing of the temple, but only the moral or spirit force of His presence. The whip of small cords was clearly used merely in starting and directing the movements of the stock, as in any cattle driving. Study of the actual text makes that quite clear.

But—but, the nations attacked were *not up on that higher level*. And the Christian Church was not, and is not. Those persons who may have been were a small minority, practically a negligible minority in numbers. Moses was not, nor Abraham before him, nor Joshua after him, nor David. The nations attacked and the Church must needs meet the attack *where they were*. And so they did. God woos to the higher level, but He helps those who ask help. He helps them *where they are*.

And, mark keenly, when a Christian *does* fight, *how* he fights, if he see clearly, and keep true. He does not fight for *vengeance*. Vengeance is

righting wrongs. That belongs to God only and exclusively.¹ And he is not fighting for *revenge*. Revenge is "getting even" with your enemy. It is hitting back at a man simply because he has hit you. That is distinctly un-Christian. It belongs to the devil. It is radically wrong in principle. The Christian, in fighting on the Moses level, is *protecting himself and his* against the attack. That belongs to man. And he is protecting against possible future attack in guarding the peace adjustments.

That at once suggests the radical difference between *offensive* and *defensive* warfare. The offensive of course is always and wholly wrong. It is of the evil one. The defensive is essential. It is not only right but obligatory, whatever level a man be on. The man living on the God level must defend himself and his against attack, bravely and to the utmost, with spirit weapons used to the full.

And this, too, answers the question of hatred. Can one fight without hating? Yes and no. He can fight with all the intensity of his being without hating personally the man opposite him in the trench, or on the line. There need be no *personal* hatred. But he cannot fight without the intensest hatred of the evil principle involved in the attack, and of the whole system that threatens his life and the lives and sacred honour of his loved ones and his country.

And splendidly the Allied soldiers have shown

¹ Romans 12:19 and parallels.

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their fine realization of the difference. The intensest, bitterest fighting by Allies has been followed or interspersed with generous humane kindly treatment of the enemy-wounded and the enemy-prisoners. One of the greatest surprises of the war was that experienced by the enemy-wounded and enemy-prisoners because of the humane treatment accorded them.

This then is the first part of the answer as to the significance of the war. It was Satan's latest attempt to work out his unholy ambition on the earth. This is fundamental. It strikes at the very root.

But it does not cover all the ground. There's a further answer. In getting at it let me make an abrupt break. It will seem like getting entirely away from the subject, but it will actually be driving straight home to its very heart. I want to ask a question: *What will be the outcome of the present order of things on the earth?* Will it simply go on endlessly, without any essential change, except, we would all hope, getting better?

There are three common answers to the question. One is this, that our Lord Jesus will return to the earth in person and establish a new, ideal order of things called the Kingdom or Millennium. And this is commonly called the pre-millennial teaching. This was the view held by the Church of the first few centuries. It is held to-day by small minorities through Christendom.

A second answer is this, things will get better, gradually, through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, until an ideal order of things is reached in all the earth, and then at the close there will be a personal return of Christ. And this has been the dominant teaching of the Church for centuries, until quite recently. It is called the post-millennium teaching.

The third answer seems to be the chief teaching in the Church of recent years. It is this: Christ will not return *personally*. He doesn't need to. He has returned and He is continually returning in spirit, in the higher standards of life, the nobler ideals, the finer humanitarianism, the broader brotherhood, and so on. I suppose this might be called the present-millennial teaching.

I was brought up in a little Scottish Church in this country where the post-millennial view was taught. Then as a mere youth I heard the pre-millennial taught very simply by dear old Moody, and accepted it as simply without study. Then I got tangled. There were so many sub-theories of this teaching. There was such dogmatism, each right and the others not. And I threw the whole thing aside. I said, I will tell people about the first coming of Christ, and try to live so that if He *does* come I'd be ready and be glad.

Then after some years I was led to take up the Bible itself and try to find out just what it did teach. I had a mental house-cleaning of all

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books on that subject. I tried to forget all I'd read. The slate was sponged off quite clean, at least as clean as I could make it.

Then I went at the old Book itself. Slowly, thoroughly, prayerfully, broodingly, I pushed on till I got through its pages. I was at the job about two years, all my spare time in between appointments. I tried severely to be wholly impartial for I was after the results *simply for my own understanding*. At the end a few things stood out clear, quite clean cut and clear. There are countless questions I can't answer to myself. But the few things stand out sharp, and of these I want to speak very briefly here.

What will be the outcome of the present order of things on the earth? This: some day the crowds on the streets and roads of the earth will be startled to find the sun's light, maybe at noon, casting a shadow; a light becoming a shadow! Startled, they will instinctively look up to see why.

It will be because of the shining of a brighter light across the sunlight. There will be a break in the blue overhead, and Christ Himself coming out of the heavens. The brighter light will be the light of His mere presence. I am speaking broadly here. The important details are touched in a later chapter.

When He does come—no one knows when—*four events* will take place, a *Church* event, a *Jew* event, a *world* event, and a *kingdom* event.

The Church event in a word is this: The break

in the blue overhead will be followed instantly by a break in the brown underfoot. That will be caused by the rising up out of their graves of all who have died, and who have had touch of heart with the Father and Jesus. Their spirits that have been in the Father's presence will re-enter their bodies as they are raised.

Then those of us who are living, and who have that same warm touch of heart with Jesus, will experience some change in our bodies. We will be caught up together with those raised up, into the presence of our Lord Jesus in the heavens. This, very briefly, is the Church event.

The Jew event is this: The Jews will see the light. Every one will see it. They will be aware that this Jesus is coming down in a blaze of glory. They will instantly recognize that He was, He is, their Messiah, after all. They will be smitten in their hearts with deepest penitence because of their treatment of their Messiah. The Holy Spirit will act upon that conviction in the hearts. And they will become radically changed in heart, a race of believers in Jesus as their long-promised Messiah. In a word this is the Jew event.

The world event will be a brief, partial, swift judgment on the system of evil in the world. Satan will be put out of action. There will be a wholly changed attitude among men toward Jesus. *The kingdom event*: there will begin a new order of things on this same old earth. The fundamental laws of nature and of life will re-

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main in force. Family life, growth, cultivation of the soil, industry, all this sort of thing will continue. But there will be certain radical moral changes. And this will continue for a long time.

But *when* will this be? I don't know. Nobody knows. The Book says plainly that we won't know, and can't. *Any* fixing of a possible time is unscriptural. But the Book does say something very definite that bears directly on the matter of *when*. It says repeatedly that the return of Christ will be *preceded by a crisis*. It will be a tremendous upheaval. It will affect the life of the whole earth. And it will be greater in extent and intensity than anything of the sort that has ever happened.

And this gives the clue to the further significance of this upheaval. The characteristics of the whole run of time from Christ's utterance up to this terrific climax, are clearly stated. Wars, rumours of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, false religious teachers, defection in the Church—these have been common to every generation.

This war has witnessed the fiercest intensifying of some of these characteristics since Christ talked of them on Olivet. Its extent has far outreached any previous event of the sort. It has convulsed the whole earth, practically. From where the Pacific washes the eastern shores of Asia, across Asia, through Europe, across the Atlantic, through the American continents clear out

to the western Pacific edge, and across the Pacific Ocean until the two edges touch, it has swirled, actually encircling the globe. Its action has swept from the frozen waters of the Arctic Circle in the north almost to the fiftieth degree of latitude south. That's practically as far as there is habitable land. In extent and in degree it is the greatest crisis the earth has known.

The very stupendousness of it naturally suggests a working up toward a climax. This seems to give *the second part* of the answer as to the war's significance. It seems like a stiffened index finger pointing straight toward such a crisis as the Book says goes before the return of Christ, and the consequent change in the order of things.

And, more yet, the war situation had in it all the elements that we are told will be in that crisis time. The people of Belgium and North-eastern France had a taste, a horribly bitter and entirely characteristic taste, of the time of persecution or tribulation that is said to be coming.

God's Index-Finger.

There are *two things* that can be stated positively. One is this, the world situation at the time of the beginning of the coming crisis. The Book of God clearly specifies certain items in that situation. The Jew is back in his own land renationalized. That means, following their passionate national instinct, with the temple

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rebuilt and the old ritual of sacrifices in full swing.

There *seems* to be a city of world shipping and world commerce in the valley of the Euphrates. There will be a coalition of European or world powers. A European coalition *means* a world coalition practically. Europe is the axis of the action of the earth. To-day Europe controls Africa as the dog the bone between its teeth. And Europe, with its working alliances, controls Asia. And quite clearly the axis has recently gotten good working connections with the American Continents. That coalition may begin as, or be, a purely practical administrative affair. That is not specified.

There will be at the head of this coalition a man of dominating striking personality who will become a great leader of evil. And through this leader there will be a time of trouble, or persecution, or tribulation, exceeding anything previously known. It will be marked by war, pestilence, famine and by religious persecution. Those five features of the world situation just preceding the crisis are definitely named. This is one thing that is clear.

There's a *second thing* that is quite clear to everybody. There will be a new map of Europe at the signing of the peace treaty, the technical end of the war. There will be a wholly new world situation. *And* it is a possibility that that new world situation *may* shift, gradually and yet swiftly, *into* that five-featured world situa-

tion of the crisis, the transition crisis that goes before the return of Christ and the new order of things.

But—*but*, there's an *acid test* to apply, an un-failing test, absolutely unfailing to one who accepts the Book. That is, *the Jew*. The Jew is the acid test to apply to world events. When the Jew goes back to Palestine and reorganizes his nation, and when he makes a seven-year treaty with some king so authorized, that means certain things following.

There will be a time of peace, armed peace, then abruptly a break in the treaty, and the beginning of the persecution and the crisis. Then the crisis after running its brief length, though it won't seem brief, will be brought to a close by the personal return of Christ. In connection with His return there will be a quick series of epochal events, and then the new order inaugurated.

And, I want to say very thoughtfully this, a venturesome thing to risk one's judgment upon, this: it is *a working possibility that this will occur in our generation*. That is to say, that the man of average age now living, and all younger, barring the usual accidents of sickness and death, will witness this tremendous climax and transition.

I said a working possibility. I might say a working probability. I do say that to myself. That has grown to be a profound and deepening conviction. But I use the more cautious word

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here. Yet I must frankly state this merely as my personal judgment on the evidence in the case, just one man's opinion.

But there's the test, the acid test by which to test any teaching, and any one's judgment—*the Jew*. His action is the unfailing test. The Jew is the puzzle of the historian and philosopher,—never yet explained by either. By all the laws of life he should have been wiped out *racially* long ago, through the mere circumstances of his surroundings. He has been scattered among the nations for centuries.

That is the thing that invariably works to the obliteration of *racial identity*. But the Jew has never lost his identity. He doesn't merge. He won't. He can't, despite his own efforts. He is the miracle of God being performed constantly. The Jew is God's index finger. His mere presence attests God's Word. He is a living certificate of the certainty of this crisis coming, and the new order following, of which the Jew is the keystone.

Wherever you meet or stumble across or bargain with a Jew, whether dealing in bonds on Wall Street or in St. Swithen's Lane or on Lloyd's, or dealing in bones on the Bowery, or old Jewry, or any Continental *Judengasse*—but never, be it marked, a down-and-outer at a mission, nor seeking alms, except in some dire extremity of Gentile persecution as of late in eastern Europe—wherever you meet a Jew you are reading a certified guarantee, God's living

human guarantee, that these tremendous events will work out.

Whether you find him handing down the decisions of a great nation's supreme bench, presiding over a world-empire's highest judicatory, organizing huge enterprises of world shipping, or the military transportation system of a great ambitious empire now fallen, or acting as the world's banker, or carrying a peddler's pack along the country highway, there you are looking at God's index-finger pointing to crisis and Christ and coming Kingdom.

This is a second significance of the war. It is the world's greatest crisis pointing to a yet greater.

What Does Count?

Two women were seated side by side in steamer chairs on the deck of an Atlantic liner coming west.¹ They got to talking, as women will do, or men. The one was a little body with narrow lines in her face but a glow in her eyes. She was telling her story. Her home was in a country village in West Virginia. She had longed to become a member of a certain woman's club, the Laurel Literary Society.

But her social status wasn't satisfactory. Her father was the village blacksmith. And

¹ Taken from a magazine article by Margaret Prescott Montague.

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she was the village dressmaker. Her childhood schoolmates were in. But, try as she would, the hinges proved too rusty to her touch. And of course the denial only whetted her intensity. It became a passion. At last she thought if she could go to Europe—nobody in town had been to Europe—if she could go, and write a paper on her experiences, they'd want that, and she'd get in.

So, she toiled and skimped and saved for years, held steady by her purpose. Then a sickness swept her savings away. But again she went at it. And at the end of some twenty years she had enough, and was off on the long planned trip. The party she was with got as far as Brussels.

"Then," she said, "we were in it." "In what?" her companion asked. "In the *war*!" It had just broken out. All their plans were broken. Then she was included in a small motor-ing party with a messenger to Paris carrying official dispatches. They were hurrying along the road some distance out of Brussels when the motor stopped.

The road was blocked. And the surroundings were very strange. They couldn't quite take it in. The fields of wheat on each side were beaten down. There were strange brown lumps scattered everywhere. Then suddenly on her side of the road a hand flung out of one of the brown lumps, and a voice said, "Water! For God's sake, water."

And impulsively she started to get out and get the man a drink. But the others earnestly stopped her. She mustn't think of it. It was too dangerous. It might cost her life. But the woman in her rose up intensely. She said, "I've got a cup, and there's a creek, and he says 'for God's sake, water,' and—and—he looks like my sister's son, and, anyhow, I'm going to get him a drink, whatever happens."

And impressed by her earnestness they let her get out. Then the road cleared partly and the motor rushed on. And there she was, left with the wounded men. And all the rest of the day and into the night she was absorbed in her errand of mercy. Back and forth from spring to men, with only her little drinking-cup she went, cheering, comforting, easing positions, taking messages.

An old ditty came mechanically to her lips. Then the tears stopped the humming of the ditty. Then she found one man who couldn't drink—he had no mouth left. Then her tears stopped. "They weren't big enough," she said; "only God's tears would do." On through the long weary night she kept up her ministrations. Her skirt was wrapped up for a pillow under a man's head.

Once she stepped on something soft and yielding. She looked down—it *was a piece of a man!* And a great bitterness came into her heart. Why did God allow it? Why didn't He stop it? Then softly she seemed aware of an unseen

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Presence with her. *He* was *helping* her. He, too, was indignant, heart-broken.

And something new broke out inside of her. There was a new something in there. And a great peace was in her heart as she toiled on. Then the morning broke. And the ambulance corps came. And then she had gotten on to Paris, and now she was on her way home. That was her story. And she sank back in her chair absorbed with the telling.

And her companion said, unthinkingly, "Well, now you'll get into the Laurel Society, won't you?" And the little woman with the narrow lines in her face instantly sat bolt upright. And her eyes blazed until her companion's cheeks burned. "Oh," she said, "you don't understand. I'm not the woman I was. I've been made over new. *None of those little things count now.*" "Those *little things!*" The plodding, consuming ambition of twenty years had become *little things*.

And her companion, rebuked and awed, said, "*What does count?*" And the little woman with the deep narrow lines and the burning eyes said softly, yet tensely, "*Only Jesus, and love, and helping folks.*" If the terrific emergency of this war may have done as much for some of us. What a shifting of perspective! What an upset of ideals! Aye, what a passion of love burning up old things and taking possession of a life!

For, after all's said and done, the war is a

plea. By indirection, it's a passionate, personal plea. It calls us to the life of surrender to the mastery of the Man who died. Then the flame that burned in Him will burn in us. It will burn up all lower purposes. It will burn out all lower fires. It will burn through into an earnest life with Him, and among men for Him.

And such a life, be it keenly noted, hastens the climax of evil. It arouses and makes tenser the opposite. It hastens His coming who stops the crisis and begins the new order. For the coming of Christ isn't fixed by a calendar but by a condition. When things have come to their dead worst He intervenes. We help Him to come back.

This is the third bit of the answer as to the significance of the war.

III

THE CRISIS COMING IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE EARTH

Storm Signals.

A CRISIS is a fork in the road. You may go one way and meet disaster. You *may* go another and find all well, the disaster avoided, and maybe better travelling.

A friendly light shining at the fork helps you to avert the disaster, and take the safe road. So a red lantern is hung up at night at the dangerous place in the city street. The city ordinance requires it. It's a friendly light.

The government takes account of possible crises. Its weather bureau saves millions of dollars annually to the people. For it tells of storms coming, and men get ready. The provident farmer in northern New England plans for the crisis of winter coming. The supply of wood and coal is put in, and the fodder for the stock, and repairs to the roof attended to.

As the west-bound ocean liner on the Pacific nears Yokohama on the way up from Honolulu, about two days out, the sailors put everything in snug, trim shape. They know they are getting near "the big black hole," where they're sure

of dirty weather, and maybe a good bit of it. Even a squirrel lays away a good store of nuts for the cold nutless winter, and the migratory birds obey the divine instinct within and get to a milder clime till the cold season is past.

There have come some terrific crises in men's affairs, each with its own outstanding characteristics; the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century, the French of the Eighteenth, the Russian and the German the two latest, that have come as tremendous details of the terrific world crisis through which we have just been passing.

And in every case these terrible upheavals have come as a complete, startling surprise to the crowds concerned. Always a few have read the sky, and told of the storm coming. But they have usually been looked at a bit suspiciously, or laughed at as being out of joint with their times. The crowds knew better—until the storm broke.

It's a friendly thing to hang a lantern out on the road on a dark night. But—*but*, it's a ticklish thing to do. People may feel so sure they know the road. There's the moon. And there's the sky's brightest starry lantern, faithful old Sirius. They can see. There's no likelihood of a storm. And so they laugh, or smile in a superior way at the poor little lantern you've been at such pains to hang out.

So many have been mistaken in hanging out danger signals. Maybe *you* are. Though the old weather sharps are the first to get ready for

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the storm while the sun's still shining, and the crowd careless. Yet—yet the lantern man *may* be *right*. Jeremiah was. The terrific events that came proved him the one man of his nation who foresaw the storm that did come.

Dear old Lord Roberts was right. Laughed at as an old man in his dotage, but with his keen practised ear to the ground, he *knew* the storm was coming. And he was right. Nobody was ready. But the British Navy, *always ready*, held things steady for the *whole world* till the Allies got ready. But how much it would have saved of precious blood and treasure and time and bitter memory if the friendly lantern had been accepted.

We have just been through the world's worst crisis. The thoughtful man agrees to that language, the world's worst crisis. But it's over. We're breathing more fully. Now the one thing on the boards is reconstruction. That's the word of the hour, reconstruction. And the one thing the great world's statesmen have set their brains and their hearts on is that *this shall never happen again*.

Our own President has done the exceptional thing in going to Europe simply to do his best to make sure that this sort of thing will never be repeated. And every true heart, American and British, Czecho-Slav and French, sends up a fervent prayer that it may indeed be so. And he would gladly back his prayer with his deeds and sacrifices.

And yet—and yet, there's a storm-signal hanging out in plain sight. There's a weather bureau that has been watching weather conditions very closely. There's a Weather Chart. And it says there's a storm coming, a bad storm, indeed the worst yet. But it'll clear after the storm, and then there's a long spell of good weather, the best weather the old earth has known since early Eden days. And it'll last so long that people will clean forget there's ever been a storm.

Happily this isn't a matter of anybody's personal opinion. It's wholly a matter of *learning how to read*, how to read the storm-signals hung out by the weather bureau. We are greatly blest in having a Weather Chart. Our gracious Father-God has seen to that. Our Lord Jesus has been at great pains to spell its meaning out plainly for us. It's a matter of learning carefully the a-b-c of the Weather Chart language, and then spelling out accurately just what the Chart says. And to the learning of that language one may well give the best thought he has.

In the fifth chapter of this little book, "The Evidence in the Case," I have tried to gather up just what the Bible tells of coming events. It's been a long, slow, tedious job to gather it out and put it together. I have tried to do it faithfully and impartially *for myself*, to learn just what the Book actually says. And I am earnestly hoping that all who have read thus far will go through that chapter, broodingly and prayer-

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fully, with the open Bible at hand for constant examination.

Everything in this chapter comes out of that chapter. There, book and chapter and verse are given for every statement. And there is nothing here which cannot be found there, with the full references. Here the thing is put in simple running shape for the busy man to get at at once. There it can be dug out more fully and verified at leisure.

Gathering Shadows.

Broadly, the fact to state is this: there is coming *a crisis* in the affairs of the whole earth. In sweep and in intensity it will surpass the crisis just past, though apparently it will not run so long. It will come through a great evil king coming into power. It will run through two stages, the persecution of good by evil, and the short, sharp judgment upon evil by God.

It will be ended by the personal return to the earth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great good King. And He will set in motion *a new blessed order of things on this same old earth*, which will run a long time. That is the whole story in a nutshell.

And I want to put down here in the simplest shape just what the Book says about this. And first of all, notice *the general condition of affairs* on the earth at the beginning of the crisis. Certain *characteristics* of the time preceding the crisis are spoken of. Naturally these will in-

tensify beforehand, as the crisis time comes near.

There will be destructive wars, disturbing rumours of wars, epidemics of disease, distressing famines, and upheaving earthquakes. There will be great increase of human activity and of human knowledge. Activity means energy. Energy coupled with increased knowledge of life and of nature's laws and nature's resources will naturally produce certain results,—love of freedom, migratory movements, efficiency, inventiveness, means of getting about or transportation, combinations of effort and interest, and vast accumulations of wealth. With wealth comes luxury; and with luxury breakdown of moral distinctions and of moral tone.

It calls to mind the keen lines,¹

“Here is the moral of all human tales;
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom, and then Glory—when that
 fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last.
And History with all her volumes vast
Hath but one page! . . .”

This last, the breakdown of moral tone, is definitely specified. There will be increased loss of morality among people generally. A disregard of law will be marked. On the part of the more disciplined it would come in a disregarding of the moral obligations of law, with a careful

¹ “Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.”

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keeping within its technicalities; on the part of the masses an open lawlessness, a breaking away from the restraints of law.

There will be a marked loss of moral tone in the social contacts of the masses. Sexual conditions are always an unfailing index finger to general moral conditions. An intensifying of looseness in sexual relationship will indicate the general moral breakdown. Yet with all this there will likewise be an increased recognition of high standards of morality and of high ideals, and a living of the highest ideals by many.

The two dominant characteristics will be the tendency to combination, and the tendency to the low moral tone indicated by a disregard of proper conventionality and of law. These are indicated as the common characteristics of world affairs as the crisis draws nigh.

The world situation, politically, is clearly indicated. There will be a ten-kingdomed confederacy or league of nations. It will develop later into an eight-kingdomed confederacy. Its territory will be north of the Mediterranean Sea. There will be another great power lying mainly south of the Mediterranean.

Whether this latter is a coalition of nations or not is not stated, but it is of sufficient numbers and power to attack and cope with the northern league. These two will be in repeated armed conflict. At the head of the northern coalition will be a king of exceptional dominating evil personality.

Apparently there will be a great city of world shipping and world commerce in the valley of the Euphrates, at or near the old site of ancient Babylon. There will be utter indifference among the crowds to the impending crisis. They will be going about their usual round of life absorbed in their affairs, business, social, and domestic, wholly oblivious to what is coming, and so taken completely by surprise.

The Jew situation is also indicated plainly. The Jew race will have been preserved practically intact up to the time of the crisis. This will be so in spite of its having been scattered for centuries among the nations, the thing that invariably results in obliteration of racial identity. Now the Jew will be renationalized in Palestine, after the centuries of denationalization. The temple will be rebuilt, and the old system of sacrifices will be in full swing. That doesn't mean that all the Jews will be gathered there, for it is made plain that they won't be.

But the Jew commonwealth will be reëstablished. There will be a seven-year treaty made by the new Jew nation with the king of the northern confederacy. This is the point, when this treaty is made, at which the thread of Jewish history is picked up by the prophetic pen.

The Church Situation.

The Church situation is likewise clearly outlined. There will be a marked falling away in the Church from the simple true faith. It will

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be so marked that it is spoken of as “*the falling away.*” There will be a decided increase in the Church of false or untrue religious teachers, teaching other things than the Gospel of the crucified Christ, with crowds of followers.

And equally marked will be the decrease in personal loyalty and devotion to Christ Himself. There will be a common attitude of rejection of the teaching of Christ’s personal return to the earth. A mocking or scoffing, or open antagonism, toward the subject will be common.

Then there is something more very difficult to speak of because it is so heart-breaking, and difficult, too, because it will naturally arouse opposition and ridicule. Yet nothing could be more plainly stated. It is this: the Holy Spirit will withdraw from the Church *as a Church*. He will still remain in individuals who believe in Christ. But He will have withdrawn from the corporate Church. It will be a forced withdrawal, and done only at the very last possible moment, and then only with deepest grief on His part.

Indeed it is His withdrawal that precipitates the crisis. There is now a restraint upon evil in the world. Evil cannot do now as it would. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in His Church that puts that restraint upon evil. It is when that gracious powerful restraining presence is withdrawn that the crisis comes, through the loosing out of evil.

The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost for a special

errand on the earth. He had been in individual men before. He came then as the Jew nation, God's messenger-nation to the world, had crucified the Messiah. He came to make by His presence a new witnessing unit, the Church. He withdraws from the Church which He formed by His presence, only because He Himself is being ignored. In its life and practical affairs He will have been left out gradually as Leader and Master, until the leaving out is complete.

Now it makes one sore at heart to repeat what the Book plainly says, that another spirit will have taken the place of the Holy Spirit. It is called the *spirit of the Antichrist*. Antichrist is John's title for the great evil leader through whom the crisis begins. It is a most significant title. God's only Begotten is the Christ. The Antichrist is the very opposite. He is the one opposed to Christ and to His coming to reign on the earth.

John tells how one may identify the true Christian teacher, and on the other hand the one who (even though unconsciously) is swayed by the spirit of the Antichrist. The touchstone of the true follower of Christ is that he is under the sway of the Holy Spirit. The distinguishing mark of the Holy Spirit is *a passion for Jesus the Christ*.

This is illustrated in the Book of Acts, which is distinctively the Holy Spirit book, marked by His presence and *control*. That book is fairly aflame with the Jesus passion. John's own Gos-

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pel tells what the meaning is to him. That book is all aflood with the passion for Jesus.

Now this, John plainly says, is the touchstone, the one unvarying, unfailing test. The absence of this Jesus passion, or the opposite of it, reveals the Antichrist spirit at work. There may be a *flat denial* of the distinctive deity of Jesus. There may be a subtle use of certain commonly accepted proper phrases but with a distinct *thinning out or watering of their meaning*.

Or, there may be something even subtler yet, simply an ignoring of Jesus, a talking about God *the Father* with a studied ignoring of Jesus. There may be a failure to proclaim the Gospel of the Crucified, and instead a discussion of subjects quite proper in themselves and in their own place.

This is the subtle spirit of the Antichrist. It is the very genius, the mark of identification of the Antichrist. This spirit spreads and strengthens till the Antichrist himself appears in person on the scene. As the crisis comes to its opening the presence of this spirit will distinctly mark the life of the Church.

Then the Church will naturally take on more of the conditions common in the world at the time. The increase in energy and knowledge will work out increased efficiency. There will be increase in a spirit of aggressiveness, with a use of the world's methods. There will be a spirit of get-together. Church union, which is the true state and spirit of the Church, will be highly

thought of, and striven for, *because* it will make for greater efficiency.

And yet with all these characteristics there will be an aggressive missionary propaganda, thoroughly organized, marked by the energy of the times. Naturally the missionary movement takes on the dominant colouring of the home Church.

The Personality of the Antichrist.

The situation in the upper spirit world at the beginning of the crisis is indicated. There comes the hour when the Holy Spirit withdraws to the upper world from His distinctive mission to the earth. It is at that time apparently, and perhaps because of the Holy Spirit's presence there, that something happens in that upper spirit world.

There is a conflict between Michael and Satan, with the hosts on each side. The initiative seems to be by Michael, as though to bring some old question to a decisive issue. Michael is the one spirit personality called "the archangel." He is spoken of as the one who stands for the Jew in that upper world. Satan up to this time has his headquarters in the heavens, somewhere below the throne of God and above this earth.

The issue of the conflict between the two is decisive. And Satan is cast out of the heavens, and down to the earth. It is at this point that there comes to the front on the earth the man of

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strange personality who develops into the leader called Antichrist. These are the general conditions that are pointed out as prevailing as the time of the crisis draws on.

The crisis itself comes through *an outstanding evil king*. *His personality* is distinctly exceptional and outstanding, getting frequent repetition and much space in the record. He is aggressive and domineering to an extreme degree. He has a remarkable eye, and a face notable for its stern, harsh expression. It is a bold, impudent, shameless, merciless face, not influenced by human amenities.

The most striking feature, however, is his speech. It is blasphemous, peculiarly arrogantly blasphemous. Indeed this is said to be the immediate cause of his downfall. He is startlingly, defiantly self-assertive and egotistical, magnifying himself above all, even above God Himself.

He is a cunning specialist in deceit. Lying and craftiness become a cursed commonplace under his influence and sway. He is an expert in all sorts of deception. Studiously skilled in entangled intricate sentences, sentences with tricky, crafty, double meanings. He is spoken of as a contemptible person, probably with reference to this moral trait.

There is a strange, uncanny phase of his personality that makes one rub his eyes to see if he sees straight. He is not only in direct alliance with Satan, but he seems to be not merely human, more than human, a blend of evil spirit

and human being, *or* else a human being utterly possessed by Satan himself.

And, further yet, of the strange sort, he seems to be a man who has had a previous career on earth, to have died, and now been raised from the dead by Satanic power for this specific work and time. This is specified repeatedly and definitely.

He is Satan's Jesus, representing him as fully as Jesus represented the Father to men. He is endowed with all of Satan's power for the time being. Such in brief is the personality of this terrible end-time king of kings, clearly outlined in the pages of God's Book. It seems quite probable that this description is as he has come to the full flood of his power and career.

His career is as striking as his personality is morally repulsive. He begins small, increasing gradually yet rapidly until he becomes the absolute autocrat of the confederacy over which he rules. He comes out of the Kingdom of Greece, gradually extending his sway in three directions (from Greece presumably), the south, the east, and the land of Palestine. He is not chosen originally as king, but slips in by craft in a time of quietness.

He becomes the head of the ten-kingdomed league of nations, which under him develops by force into an eight-kingdomed league. He is likewise spoken of as the king of the north, during the conflict north and south at the east end of the Mediterranean, indicating that the ten-king-

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domed league is north, or mainly north, of the Mediterranean. And this confederacy at the end seems to include the peoples of the Russian countries, who are singled out for special mention.

He makes it a definite part of his propaganda to break down and undermine truth and honesty, displacing them with the rankest deceit and lying and lack of honesty. The grossest corruption flourishes under his influence. For the brief time of his sway his success seems overpowering. The language used indicates that he runs riot, rides ruthlessly rough shod over all obstacles and seems undefeatable.

The Jew seems a special object of his hatred. With all the intensity of his outstanding characteristics he conjures up the worst indignities for the newly formed Jew nation, and for the things dearest and most sacred to them, the temple and the system of sacrificial worship. He seems to vent his hatred of God against the Jews as though he recognizes them as God's people and distinctive representative.

Strange as it may seem, his activity is said to extend to the upper spirit world. Many of the host of heaven are contaminated by his power and cast down and trampled upon, though just how is not made clear. It is distinctly said that his power is not his own. Clearly he is the one chosen by Satan as his representative, and endowed with all the power at his disposal. In him Satan is doing his best and his worst to drive through his own ambitions.

The Career of the Antichrist.

After coming to the head of the confederacy there are *five distinct stages* to his career.

He begins as a man of peace, armed peace. He strengthens himself with the newly formed Jew nation by making a treaty with them for a seven-year period. The making of this treaty identifies the Antichrist to the thoughtful observer of events. Then he takes advantage of the treaty, by deceit and by attack, working one group against another, and by bribes and spoils of war, to drive through his purpose.

Apparently that purpose is to be able to pass through the land of Palestine, as though the Jew nation were possibly a neutral or buffer state. For he at once passes through Palestine and makes an attack with great force on the power lying south of the Mediterranean, in which he meets great success. Drunken with his success he returns north through Palestine, and his heart is against the Jewish treaty as though of no further use to him, and so not to be allowed to hamper his plans.

Then he makes a second attack on the south, but this time he fails. He returns north again through Palestine. Apparently filled with rage over his defeat and the failure of this second campaign, he vents his rage on the Jew. The treaty is abruptly and ruthlessly broken. He succeeds in doing this by means of intrigue and force among the Jews.

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And he vents his spleen by stopping the sacrificial worship and by the desecration of the Jewish temple. This desecration is regarded as the very climax of blasphemous abomination to God. It would seem as though he seats himself in the holiest places of the temple, setting himself forth as God and requiring that worship be offered to him. This is the point at which the persecution of the Jew begins. And while many are untrue, many others suffer a noble martyrdom. It is a time of sorest stress.

Then he meets an attack by the power of the south. He meets it with great forces, military and naval, coming "like a whirlwind." And he has great success, but not complete success. Bad news reaches him from the north and east and he returns north with great fury. On his way he passes through Palestine and makes his headquarters at Jerusalem. And it is there that he meets his end with great abruptness.

There is a distinct check to his power at the first phase of the personal return of our Lord Jesus. The persecution of the Jew ceases. And the visitation of judgments begins at this point, though the Antichrist is not slain till later.

Then after this check he makes a final supreme effort, rallying all possible forces for the last great attempt. Then comes the crisis in his career. He is slain by the open appearance of Christ out of the open heavens. His career seems to run through seven years, most of these events occurring in the latter half. Such seems

to be the personality and career of this strange evil king as outlined here by the Spirit of God.

The Crisis.

And now a look at *the crisis* which comes through this evil king. There are two distinct phases to it. And these two stand in sharpest contrast with each other. The first is the persecution of the Jew and of the Church by the powers of evil. The second is the exact reverse, a brief partial visitation of judgments on evil by God's direct intervention. The whole thing is spoken of as "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time."

It is of intense interest to note *the principle underlying God's action* in all this. It is simply a withdrawal, a partial withdrawal. It is as though man's unspoken prayer, the prayer of action and attitude, is being answered, partly. God has been so much blasphemed or ignored, practically left out of reckoning so far as possible. He never ignores any one or leaves him out of His unfailing, creative, sustaining care.

Now there's a partial withdrawal. God simply does less; that is all. The persecution comes through the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit, a partial withdrawal, from the Church. The visitation of judgments comes through a partial withdrawal of the Creator's preserving, sustaining touch in the common life of men, and of the earth, and of the heavens.

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The *immediate world situation* just before the crisis begins is stated. There will be a series of armed conflicts at the Mediterranean Sea, swinging toward, and at, the east end, between powers lying north and south of that Sea. These will be on a large scale involving great numbers. Success sways back and forth. These actions are preceded by an attempted alliance between these two. The terrible king comes to the head of the northern power during a lull in these conflicts. He appears first as a man of peace, armed peace.

The crisis is preceded and ushered in by a time of armed peace. The center of action during the crisis is the Mediterranean, chiefly the eastern end, and apparently extending to include the valley of the Euphrates. Just how far, territorially, the persecution extends is not specified.

It would seem natural that it would be severest near the center of action. But the authority and sway of the evil king, so far as the power given him by Satan is concerned, is represented as being world-wide. And the visitation of judgments seems to include the whole earth.

The crisis begins with the persecution of the Jew. It is distinctly a religious persecution. It begins at Jerusalem. The sacrificial worship of the Jew is abruptly stopped. And the temple is desecrated, evidently in the most extreme and obnoxious way, both to the Jew and to God. Then follows personal persecution of Jewish men and women, many escaping suffering by being untrue, and many suffering martyrdom.

Later there comes the persecution of the Church. That is, it is directed against any one who will not obey the mandates issued. There will be a revival of emperor worship, an image being set up in honour of the Antichrist-king, and failure to worship will be punishable with death. There will be restraint upon trading; buying and selling being strictly limited to those who are loyal to the king.

The persecution will be severe to the extreme. It will be a time of severe sifting. Naturally many who are in church membership but have no real touch of heart with Christ will balk at the persecution, and go with the outer crowd. Many will suffer a noble martyrdom. And many others who are true *and* have learned, maybe through sore experiences, to live by faith, will be delivered, being kept by divine power through the persecution.

The story of the Third of Daniel will find many a duplicate. Refusal to join in the blasphemous emperor worship will lead to the intensest fires of persecution, but through quiet supernatural intervention there will be deliverance, and so a wonderful witness will be given to the ruler and to the crowds of the reality of God and His power.

During all this period there will be marked increase in demon activity, some of it under guise of Christian leadership. Men pretending to be the Christ, and so leading the crowds astray, will add to the confusion. More per-

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plexing yet to the crowds, untaught and undiscerning, will be the miracles wrought by Satanic power, bewildering in number and in kind, even to calling down fire from heaven as evidence of being God's messengers. A miracle of course merely means supernatural power at work. It may be of God, *or*, it *may* be of the devil. Archbishop Trench emphasizes this in his book on the miracles.

It will be a time of sore perplexity to countless numbers of church members, untaught and undiscerning. Yet there will be sure help and anchorage for all who will be true even to the point of suffering. There will be those who have learned to walk by faith, and who now remain true, and give a steady ringing witness to the truth. It will be a wondrous privilege to be witnessing in the midst of the church crowds, confused, bewildered, compromising and hiding.

And there is special leadership provided by God for His people. There will be two remarkable men preaching the truth of the crucified Christ and His power to the crowds. They will be in Jerusalem. They will be dressed in mourning to emphasize their protest against the order of things going on.

And they will be entrusted with supernatural power. All the attempts to kill them will fail until their work is fully done. And they will have power to verify their message by performing miracles, restraining needed rain, causing plagues to come as Moses did in Egypt, and

calling down fire out of heaven. It is probable that the Satanic miracles will be resorted to, to offset the influence on the crowds of these two men.

There is a definite limit set to the time of this persecution. It will be for three and a half years, that is, twelve hundred and sixty actual days. At the end of that time these two leaders are killed, their bodies left lying unburied in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days. Then they are restored to life, and caught up into heaven before the eyes of the astonished terror-stricken crowds, who had been rejoicing over their death.

The persecution is brought abruptly to a close by the first phase of the coming back of the Lord Jesus. There appears in the skies some evidence of His approach to earth. And then His own are caught up out of the tribulation or persecution which thus comes to its close.

It should be noted that the day and hour of our Lord's return is not known and cannot be. There are certain portions of time named giving the relation of events to each other at the time, but nothing to indicate in terms of time the relation of these things to our own calendar.

Our Lord's Approach to the Earth.

And now a look at *the actual personal return of our Lord Jesus* to the earth. There are two distinct phases to His return. When our President returns from Europe his vessel will be

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sighted first off the Nantucket Light, and some hours later it will be seen coming through the Lower Bay and the Narrows. And the wires will flash the word that he has arrived. Yet he will actually have arrived only when he steps off of the gangplank at the Hoboken dock. Naturally, it is something like that.

In the midst of the persecution suddenly there will be some evidence in the sky of *our Lord's approach in person toward the earth*. Just what that sign is is not specified. It may be a light, very likely. It was a light above the brightness of the sun that smote upon Paul's stupefied gaze, on the Damascus road, when Jesus appeared to him. On the Transfiguration Mount the chief impression the disciples got was of light. Jesus' face was like the sun, and his garments dazzling because of the light shining through them.

But if a light, it will be a very unusual light, a supernatural light, clear, distinct, of dazzling splendour, instantly recognized as something different from sunlight. It will probably be seen clear around the planet, at night-time here and daytime yonder, twilight and dawn in between. The crowds everywhere will see it. Instantly there will be an unexplained sensing of the fact that this is something quite out of the ordinary. For with the light there will be a something else, indefinable, but felt by the crowds as something from God.

Then there will be evidence to the ear, a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God,

a threefold announcement. The shout is the shout of a summons, a ringing call to action. The trump is also a summons to action as of a general giving marching orders.

Instantly there are four distinct happenings, to four classes of persons: To the Jew, to the dead who have had touch of heart with God, to the followers of Christ who are living, and to the common crowds everywhere.

The Jew will instantly recognize that this is *Jesus* coming down to the earth, the Jesus whom their race rejected, and was the means of putting to death, the Jesus who claimed to be their Messiah. There will come to them the intense inner conviction that He *was*, He *is*, their Messiah. All this will be through the touch of the Holy Spirit upon them.

They will be radically changed in heart and in nature through that touch. The common word is "converted." They will become a nation believing in and accepting Jesus as their Messiah. This seems to be true commonly of the whole Jewish people, some of whom will be in Palestine nationalized, and probably the larger part scattered, as now, all over the world.

Then there will be a *partial resurrection of the dead*. At the approach of Jesus there will be a supernatural life-giving touch of power upon the dead bodies of all those who have had simple, true touch of heart with God. The break in the blue overhead will be followed by a break in the brown underfoot. And these will rise up out of

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the graves. Their human spirits, which have been in God's presence, will reënter their bodies.

At the same moment something akin will happen to *those living* who are trusting the Father and Jesus Christ the Saviour. There will come to their bodies likewise a supernatural touch, making some radical change, so that as they have hitherto responded to a law of gravity toward the earth, now they will answer to the upper pull of a new law of gravity, spirit gravity.

It will not be any special group or class of Christians, but all who in their hearts are trusting Christ. It will not be a matter of Christian attainment but only of trusting Christ who died for us. Not what we have done, but what He did. And these two groups, the raised-up and the changed, will have a wondrous meeting in the air as they rise up together toward their new center of gravity, the Lord Jesus. What a reunion that will be of loved ones with each other, and all with our Lord Jesus!

As these are caught up into the presence of our Lord Jesus, the Man of Fire, the *fire test* of His mere presence will naturally at once affect them. Whatever there is in them of character, and of life, and of service, that cannot stand that test will become as ashes.

Perhaps one thinks quickly of those lost at sea, and of those blown to pieces too small to find and gather, in the awful carnage of this war, and naturally wonders how they could be raised. The thing seems quite impossible. But it must

be remembered that the whole movement is supernatural. The power of God is at work. And it gives emphasis to the preciousness and sacredness of these bodies of ours that they are raised again. They, too, our very bodies, are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

All the rest, *the crowds* everywhere, will be left on the earth amazed and stupefied by what has just happened. They will understand in some more or less definite way what has occurred. They will quickly recognize its meaning for them. They are "left" behind, while Christians have been taken up and away.

There will come to many a deep sense of penitence. They will know that they have been wrong in their attitude. Some will at once take a stand for Christ and against the Antichrist, and will suffer martyrdom. This is the original setting of the much quoted classical bit: "Blessed are the dead who die because of their loyalty to the Lord; surely saith the Spirit, from this time they rest from their sore experiences; and their deeds in this crisis follow them."¹

These are the four things that happen at the instant of Jesus' approach to the earth. They happen at once, simultaneously. The whole movement comes with abrupt suddenness and swiftness. It comes like a flash of lightning out of a clear sky, as sudden, as swift, as open, and as widely observed.

It comes to the unprepared crowds with the

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intense disagreeable surprise of one finding that a thief has broken into his home and carried off his most valued treasures. This is the beginning of "the day of the Lord." It is the beginning of the end of "the day of Satan"; the full end follows very quickly.

Our Lord's Arrival.

This makes *a new situation on the earth*, a radically changed situation. The *Church* has gone, all those who have had heart touch with God and with Christ. The *Jew* is wholly radically changed in heart. The *crowds* left behind are startled and penitent. The power of the *Antichrist* has had a decided check.

Now there follows immediately on the earth *the visitation of judgments*, partial judgment, and judgment *in principle* on the system of evil, rather than upon the race as such. The earth or land, the sea, the rivers and the sun are affected by plagues or serious disturbances. What would commonly be called afflictions and calamities take place.

An epidemic of very distressing ulcerous sores breaks out. The water becomes unfit to drink, causing great suffering and death among both men and beasts. The heat of the sun becomes intolerably excessive. The throne, or kingdom, or administration, of the Antichrist-king becomes affected in some distressing way which causes suffering, and checks its power.

And the Euphrates River is affected, as though

it were directly connected, as the center of operation, with the reign of the Antichrist and the system of evil. These visitations cause great suffering, they hamper the power of the terrible persecuting king. Yet it is striking to note that they do not produce penitence, but the reverse, blasphemous reviling of God who is recognized as responsible. The whole thing has a striking parallel in the plagues of Egypt.

At this point there is a rallying of the forces of evil. It is a gigantic rally of all resources available against God, in utter defiance of Him and His power. There is a loosening out of demons in countless hordes. They are said to be loosened out at the Euphrates, as though that were the center of Satanic power. There is an effort, through demon activity, to rally the kings of the whole earth in a supreme movement.

It seems to be against both the Jew and God, as though it was striking at God to strike against the Jew. A veritable passion of hate for the Jew seems to take uncontrolled passion of these leaders and forces rallied. They are said to be gathered at Armageddon. Yet the terrible climax of action, both human and divine, comes at Jerusalem. It looks as though the action includes both places, with the final supreme effort at the Jew capital.

The climax at Jerusalem takes the form of a siege by all the nations gathered there. The siege goes to the very worst extremity for the Jew, the city is taken, the houses looted, and the

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worst unnameable horrors and excesses with which we have lately been getting so terribly familiar, take place. It is at this point that supernatural intervention takes place.

There occurs a terrible, outstanding day. It is a dark day. The sun becomes as black as black haircloth. The whole moon looks like blood. The natural forces that hold the heavenly bodies in place seem to lose their usual power. The stars fall, as would the fruit from a fig tree in a violent wind storm.

This occurs around the whole earth, where the sun is shining and where the moon is lighting the night. As a natural result men are terror-stricken. The sense of terror is so great that some expire of sheer fear. There is the possibility that this has been so in gradual degree for some time. But now it comes to a terrific climax in this dark day.

Then at eventide of that day there comes the great climax of intervention. *Jesus appears* out of the open heavens over Jerusalem. It is recognized that it is Jesus Himself. But He comes in a splendour of glory impossible for words to tell. It is simply the glory of His own presence, but it is dazzling, blinding, overwhelming. Not simply the light blazing out from His person, but the mere sense of His presence is overwhelming. All hair-splitting discussions about the essential deity of Jesus instantly vanish into thin air. The blinding Sinai experience would seem like a mere prelude to this, a mere rehearsal.

The instant effect on the crowds gathered there is utterly overwhelming, indescribable. Kings, princes, generals, nobles, men of great wealth, together with the common crowds, will be down on their faces terror-stricken, hunting holes to hide in, and calling on the hills to fall upon them, and hide them from the righteous wrath of this Jesus-God whose glory is blinding their eyes and striking terror into the marrow of their bones.

This visible appearance of Jesus in glory is the second phase of His return. It is His arrival in full. He comes to Olivet on the east of Jerusalem. His feet touch the mount. His coming is attended by an earthquake unprecedented in violence and extent. With it will be a storm of lightning and thunder and rain and great hailstones.

There occur radical changes in the surface of the earth at Jerusalem. Olivet splits into two parts, moving toward the north and south, the line of cleavage running east and west, a great valley being created between the two halves.

As He appears out of the open heaven above Olivet, Jesus will be accompanied not only by angels but by some of the redeemed. Not by all, it seems quite plain, but by certain ones, "called and chosen and faithful." All are caught away at His first approach, for that is a matter of being redeemed as sinners by His precious blood. Now it is those who, having responded to the *call* for salvation, have been

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chosen for service, and been faithful in obeying. These now have a part with Him in the day of His action.

The mere presence of the glorified Jesus settles the great conflict. The Antichrist is slain, and his immediate associated leaders. The whole system of evil in the earth called Babylon is judged and doomed and falls at one simple stroke. Apparently the mighty city of world-commerce in the valley of the Euphrates which has been the capital or center, either actually or practically, of the system, is demolished in the earthquake.

The Acid Test.

God's method of warfare is noteworthy. The leaders are killed by the sword that comes forth *out of the mouth* of Him who appears. The same One who created things by a word now acts in judgment in the same way. The immense numbers who are gathered against Jerusalem become terror-stricken; a confused tumult breaks out among both men and horses. There is an utter loss of self-confidence or morale. Discord breaks out in the ranks. They take to fighting each other. Pestilence breaks out, and a strange loss of vitality affects them.

It is worth remembering here what has been said a little bit back, that the principle of judgment is simply the partial withdrawal of the divine creator power that holds things together and keeps life and vigour in man and beast, and

all nature. The judgment at this time is characteristically upon the system of evil, not upon men individually except as involved in the other.

And it becomes of keenest interest to note that repeatedly we are told that the judgment is not merely upon the system of organized evil on the earth, but far more significant, upon the great evil prince himself and his hosts of evil spirit beings back of the system, and working through it against God Himself.

The length of time involved in all this visitation of judgment seems to be seventy-five days. It is the time intervening between the two phases of our Lord's return, the sign of His approach and His full arrival at Olivet. And the same characteristic of abrupt suddenness and swiftness is noted in this climax of Jesus' arrival as in the sign of His approach.

Then after a brief time of readjustment, a new order of things on the earth is inaugurated. *The transition period* covers about six years and a quarter of ordinary reckoning. That is to say from the beginning of the crisis up until the beginning of the new order will be twenty-three hundred actual days. The word year does not stand for the same definite period of time throughout history. It is a variable term. And so the time is stated in actual days.

This transition period falls into three parts. The persecution of Jew and Church runs through twelve hundred and sixty actual days, a

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little less than three and a half ordinary years. The visitation of judgments immediately following runs through seventy-five days. Then there is a time of readjustment following, covering some nine hundred and sixty-five days, or roughly about two years and nearly eight months of ordinary reckoning. It will again be noted that while these portions of time are specifically named yet the day and hour of our Lord's return is not, and will not be, known.

Such seems to be a summing up of what this Book of God stresses as a crisis coming in the affairs of the earth. I am not stating my personal opinion regarding all this. My task is simpler. I am simply trying most carefully to sift out and put together what this old Book says. It's a matter of accurate reading of the Book. The chief thing is to know and to note just what God's Book does say. The conviction deepens with me continually that this Book is absolutely dependable as revealing God's purpose, and also as revealing what God sees will work out on the earth through the freedom of choice and action which He reverently, unvaryingly, insists that man shall have.

Happily there is an acid test to apply to all this—the Jew. Even if a man doesn't believe the Bible, there's the Jew. You can't get away from the Jew, the fact of his existence. By all philosophy and reckoning the Jew should have been obliterated *racially* centuries ago. Homeless, denationalized, flagless, persecuted, scattered

among all the peoples of the earth for centuries—this is the very sort of thing that inevitably tends to rub completely out all racial identity.

But God's Word says he will be preserved until these things work out. Even persistent Jewish efforts at being merged into other nations have failed. His preservation and these events are tied up, and knotted together by the finger of God. The presence of the Jew in the common life of the nation to-day is God's certificate of the certainty of this crisis, *and* the blessed order following.

The Finest Accomplishment.

But *when* will all this be? No one knows. Our dear saintly friends who make calendars and fix dates seem to have missed the meaning of the Book. For it will be in such an hour as they think not, so spoiling all calculations. It is said repeatedly to be "at hand." And that is the word used centuries ago.

Pretty clearly the meaning of that is that this is *the next item on God's program* for the earth. Man's opportunity is being lengthened out even yet. Our Lord is extremely reluctant that any should perish through failure to use the opportunity. There is no intervening item on God's slate. This comes next when He decides to step in and straighten things out. The time is at hand. It is hanging over our heads, impending.

There's another word like this that is worth noting as to its precise meaning. "I come

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quickly," says our Lord four times in Revelation, the closing Book. And at the beginning of that Book it says "the things that must *shortly* come to pass." Repeated study makes it seem quite clear that in each case the meaning seems to refer to the *manner* of His coming, not the *time*. The word, swiftly or speedily, could be quite as accurately used. He comes with a sudden swift movement when He does come.

Yet there is an index finger, to point the way. *The Jew is God's index finger*. When the Jew returns to Palestine and forms again the Jewish nation or commonwealth the finger is pointing steady and true.

And when once back renationalized, he makes a seven-year treaty with a king at the head of a league of nations, then that index finger is stiffening and straightening out, pointing unmistakably to certain events, and to the coming of the King.

And the practical attitude of the simple-hearted, true follower of Christ is continually stressed. One word from our Lord's lips is typical of all. "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may get the victory in your personal lives over all the evil influences in the world, and so be pleasing and acceptable to Jesus when He comes."¹

A through express train was held up in the far west by a heavy snow which blocked the

¹Luke 21:36 paraphrased to give the accurate sense of the Greek.

track, some years ago. It was a couple of days before the way was clear. Happily there was a well-stocked diner. The passengers in one of the sleeping-cars got together and proposed an *accomplishment* meeting to while away the time.

Each one was to tell his accomplishment, in a spirit of good-natured banter and jollity. One young man said he was a rising lawyer, very keen and wide awake, rapidly pushing his way up to the top, big fees coming in, and he expected soon to be moving up to Easy Street; and they all laughed as he boasted of his accomplishment. A young lady told that she was a rare musician. People were spellbound as she played and sang. So it went on through the little crowd, each trying to outdo the others, amid much merriment.

Finally they had all spoken except one man. He was a farmer apparently. His spare face was deeply tanned and lined. His hands were those of a toiler; his clothing plain. He had the appearance of a plain farmer who had prospered. The crowd looked his way. He flushed up a bit. He wasn't quite of their social status, and felt it.

"Well," he said, "I'm just a plain farmer, used to the stock and the open plains. When I have to go to the city on business, I hurry through as fast as I can. It really scares ~~me~~ in town, the rush and the crowd, the noise and automobiles, and all that. It sort of frightens me; I want to get back home.

"But"—he paused and flushed a bit more,

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then went steadily on in a quiet, low voice—"but, wife and I believe in prayer; we believe in Jesus Christ; we kneel down nights and mornings and pray, and we believe God hears us." He paused. A hush had swept softly over the little sleeping-car group. Eyes began to glisten. And then a woman's voice softly began, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and they knew there was an unseen Presence there.

That was *his accomplishment*. It's *the thing* that'll count as the finest accomplishment, the biggest achievement, when the King comes. Just to live true in the simple, commonplace round, doing faithfully the day's tasks, with a warm hand for one's fellows, and the heart always in fresh touch with the great heart that broke for all men, and for us.

IV

THE NEW ORDER OF THINGS

An Earth-wide Chorus.

THERE'S a murmur of music around the earth. Low, deep, rich, clear, full, it never ceases. Through the roar of guns, the swish of the air artillery, the din of the trenches, it ever runs a pleading, hungry cadence.

In Armistice days, at the Peace table, through the skilled interplay of statesmen earnestly planning a peace that shall not be broken, its expectant, eager, confident chording is never out of ear-shot of the hearts at work.

Over the terraced, fortified Rhine, up and down the swift Rhone, along the winding courses of the blue Danube, and the troubled Volga, the sluggish Nile and the muddy Jordan, the Euphrates and the Ganges, the Yangtse and the Congo, as by Thames and Seine and Potomac and Amazon, its eager, persistent notes never die away. It begins anew with every fresh dawn, pulses through the day's heat and cold, and dies not away at twilight but persists on through the starry watches of the night.

It unites all Christendom, Greek Orthodox and Latin Catholic, Protestant state Church and Free, the primitive Churches of the Levant and

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Abyssinia and Southern India, with Chinese Church and Japanese, and Indian. All alike plead the same bit of rhythmic prayer, *Thy Kingdom come*.

It began nearly twenty centuries ago. And time has never been able to check or slow its rhythm or to still its plea. It began on the shores of the Center-of-the-earth Sea and has touched and sweetened every sea and shore, every valley and plain, clear to the earth's farthest rim.

Its key-note was sounded by the Man who came to the earth on a special errand for His Father. So clear and winsome, so distinct and impelling, was that key-note sounded that no noise of war or trade or revelry has been able to drown out its sweet, wooing music.

Yet all this music is only an echo. And the echo is always less than the original. Earth is a sounding-board that has caught the music of heaven, and keeps it sounding and resounding ever more. For the original music is in the heart of God and He never will be content till the symphony of His heart dominates all the life of the race.

God has an ideal for man. I mean an ideal for his life down on this old earth. God is a practical idealist. He broods over ideals for man. And then He gives the wealth of His love and life and power to making the ideals *real*. This ideal thus far has been very costly to Him. It cost Him the thing dearest to Him. But He insists that it shall come true regardless of cost.

There's an early picture that tells the whole of God's ideals at a single glance. For simplicity and winsomeness that picture stands out above all others. God and man are walking together in a garden. Man's first home was a garden. It's a wondrous garden. There are fruits and flowers, trees and shrubs, singing birds and rare animals. And there's a wondrous stream of crystal-clear water flowing through the midst of the garden.

And these two, God and man, are companions together. They are like each other. They talk and walk and work together. Indeed the man helps God finish up the work of creation, for things haven't been named yet. And things must have names. And so God lets man do the thing he *can* do. He suggests suitable names for trees and birds and all the rest, and God says, "Those'll be their names." So they worked together and talked together.

It's a wondrously homey picture of fellowship and companionship and service together. It was God's own plan, His ideal, the ideal He still carries in His heart. But sin broke the picture. God's highest gift to man, free choice, His own very likeness, had in it the possibility of trouble. It always has. The power of choice was used in making a wrong choice. That was the break. It was a heart-breaking break to God.

But God has never lost heart. He doesn't, and He won't. Eden was hardly broken until the new Eden on the same earth was planned.

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God put the Eden music in the human heart. And it has never been lost. Everywhere through the centuries there's been the weary sigh over life's disappointments, and the intense longing for the real thing.

Literature tells the story. Early Norse folklore and Celtic and Arab, have pictured longingly an ideal future state of things. Greek sage, and Latin, have written the same story of coming days which never came. The tall, thoughtful Spaniard's venturesome discovery of a new world broke up the fondly cherished Atlantis ideal beyond the pillared Gibraltar Straits, but it didn't stop the longing of men's hearts.

Still the music of God persisted. And still men wrote and dreamed. More's "Utopia" simply led the way for a long file of followers up to this very hour. The Eden music still sings. God's ideal has its echo in the heart of the race, and in every human heart. It's a bit of sure prophecy of a day, *the day* that's coming.

God's Ideal for the Earth.

God's ideal centered in Jesus. The original purpose in the coming of Jesus, centuries ago, was to set up a kingdom, God's kingdom, a new order of things, the Eden order. And the plan could have worked out then. But again sin, wrong choice, bad choice, broke the plan. For the plan hinged on man's choice, and it still hinges there. When the kingdom does come it will be through human choice.

Jesus knew, and the Father knew, of course, how things would turn out. And together they counselled to fit into the new changed situation, the broken plan, made by man's stubborn choice. They decided that Jesus would yield to hate, and so work out by His bloodshed the redeeming of man. But the first plan itself has never been lost sight of. It has been enriched and hallowed by the precious blood spilt, but never lost.

And so Jesus must come back because the thing He came to do that first time has not been done. He must come to carry out the original plan. His word is pledged to it. It's a matter of good faith, the coming back again.

There's an etching in the older leaves of our Book. Line after line it grows, from faint outline to clearer and bolder. A touch here, a stroke yonder, bit by bit, it comes to view, a wondrously winsome conception of the ideal order of things planned for the old earth.

No, it's not an etching. That's only black and white. This is a painting in colours, rich and brilliant, scarlet and gold, and blue and purple. It is done in oils, not to be rubbed out by wear of time, nor waste nor neglect.

That picture comes to-day all afresh with peculiar attraction to this poor, old, blood-stained, gun-ploughed battle-field of an earth. It's of a kingdom set up among men, in brotherly loving-kindness, marked by the strictest sense of right and justice and impartial fairness to all, to the utmost degree. There will be no use of

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force. The only means of influencing men will be by earnest, patient, brotherly persuasion.

Broken hearts will be healed, prison doors unhung as being no longer needed. Broken family circles completed about the cheery fire-side, amid a time of great rejoicing. The calendar will always hang open at May. The poor, that big majority, has special repeated attention. There will be no hunger, nor cold, nor ill-clad, no unemployed begging for a chance to earn a dry crust, and no workers fighting for a fair share of their sweat-wet toil.

I want to gather out just what this book of God does say about this Eden ideal of His. There is a fullness and definiteness of detailed statement, both surprising and pleasing. And then there is much that follows, logically follows, as the natural result of these statements.

I want to put it down here as simply and clearly as I can. It will be noted again that I am not expressing any personal opinion but simply gathering out what the Book seems to say. All that is here can be found much more fully in chapter five of this little book.

There is a great deal in that chapter not here. But there is nothing here that cannot be found there, with full references, book and chapter and verse. And it should be kept in mind that while there is a sharp, decisive, tremendous *start* to the new order of things, yet it will work out, not magically but *gradually*, following the common law of life.

The New Order of Things is a phrase given us by our Lord Jesus Himself. It will be unlike anything ever known, in certain particulars. It will come by *the personal presence and reign of God Himself*. But He won't be a stranger to us. It will be the same One who made man's home ready for him, that creative week back in the beginning of things, and who spent the day with our first forefather in Eden.

We will recognize Him as the Man who walked among us on Palestine's hills and valleys as Jesus, sharing all our common experiences. He gave His breath to us and His presence with us in Eden, and His blood for us on Calvary: Now He comes to give His own presence with us again, in a new, intimate, wondrous way.

The capital city of the kingdom will be marked by the visible presence of God, even as was the tabernacle in the desert sands. The Transfiguration Mount, and the Forty Days after the resurrection give together a blend of what His presence will be like.

In the one He appears in a dazzling blaze of divine glory. Yet He is conversing quietly with two men about things of interest on the earth. In the other He comes at unexpected times, talking, eating, building a fire on the sands for cold men, and cooking a fish for their hunger, and leaving them as He came.

A Changed Jew Leading.

Yet the kingdom or mode of rule is to be *a*

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Jew kingdom. The Jews will again be recognized as God's peculiar people. Their kingdom will be restored. Their present rejection as His messenger-nation is only temporary. The Gentiles or non-Jewish nations have their opportunity as rulers now. That opportunity will have run to the full. Then the change comes. The times of the Gentiles' rule will be run out. The time of the Jew will have come.

God Himself will reign, but He will reign *through* the Jew. Jesus the Son of God will be King of the Jews *and* through them of the whole earth. It will be a revival through Jesus of the old David dynasty. The age-long reproach of the Jew will be gone. He will be reckoned a blessing instead of a thing to be cursed.

There will be a gathering together of Jews from all parts of the earth to Palestine. Even their old-time inveterate traditional enemies will now eagerly help them back. The Jew will be *the first nation* of the world, at the head of all the others. Acceptance of his leadership will be voluntary and eager. This indicates the wholly new spirit in the world. But it will be a wholly new sort of leadership, a non-military leadership.

Jerusalem will be the Jew capital, and so *the world capital*. But it will be literally a new Jerusalem. There will be certain changes in the surface of the earth at Palestine through that tremendous earthquake. Splendid rivers will connect Jerusalem with the Mediterranean and

so with the commerce of the world. The national boundaries will be extended to the original lines.

There will be annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem from all parts of the earth. It will be to a harvest-home festival there. And this will become a touchstone of loyalty to God. Those failing to keep in loyal touch with Him will find their lives and lands seriously affected. It would be by the natural action of cutting themselves off from their source of life.

The Jew will become the arbiter of disputes and differences among the nations. He will be voluntarily appealed to, and his decisions accepted and acquiesced in as just and right. More yet, surprising as this will seem, the Jew will be regarded as *the protector* of other nations, even as man is woman's natural protector. He will be a blessing to all the peoples, so recognized and gratefully acknowledged.

But—*but*, it will be a *changed Jew*, radically changed. It will be as the Chinese house-servant expressed himself to his Christian employer who returned home after an absence. The servant had been lazy and slovenly and inefficient. Now he was clean, eager and industrious. The missionary employer could scarce believe his eyes. He asked for an explanation. The servant, who had been really converted during his master's absence, put his answer into characteristic colloquial Chinese talk. He said, "*I've changed my bones and come out of my*

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skin.” It’ll be as radical a change as that in the Jew.

The change will be by God’s direct touch, making them over new inside, so changing at the core everything needing change. The Holy Spirit will be poured out upon the Jew nation, individually and as a nation. The Jews will become deeply penitent, broken-heartedly penitent, for their past attitude toward God, their rejection of Jesus their Messiah. An utterly new spirit will be in possession. They will be literally born again in spirit, born anew, born from above.

As a result they will be a cleansed, ennobled, holy people, truly representative of a pure, loving God. There could perhaps be no keener statement than this, that what is commonly thought of as the characteristic Jewish trait, commercialism, selfish cut-throat commercialism, is quite gone.

In its place will be a passionate devotion to God, and ideal sympathetic brotherliness toward men. The very atmosphere of Jerusalem and the Jew nation will be utter devotion to God and consequent unselfish brotherliness toward all. There will be a fine spirit of unity among the Jews themselves.

The Jews will become characteristically a *teacher* nation, *the* teacher nation. They will be endowed with special teaching gifts, and will delight in using them. They will be distinctively a *missionary* nation. With all their natural in-

tensity, and versatile gifts, they will go out to all nations that have not been taught about the real God. That's the great majority, of course. Two-thirds of the race to-day, reckoning roughly, have never heard the story of the Father's love in sending Jesus.

The great illustration here is Paul. Paul's spirit and his whole career from the Damascus road to the "hired house" of Rome and the headsman's block outside, make a prophetic picture of the new Jew nation. The same passionate earnestness and undiscourageable persistence will drive the Jew out to tell the race of Jesus.

The early chapters of Acts give another vivid illustration. The early Church of course is entirely a Jew Church. The brotherliness and unselfishness, the joy and simplicity of daily life, the reckoning of their possessions in common that none might suffer need, the boldness in preaching Jesus even to persecution—these tell eloquently the new spirit in the new Jew.

The presence and influence of the Jew will be to the peoples of the whole earth as the dews of Palestine in olden days. Evaporation from the Dead Sea filled the air with moisture. The chill air of frosty Hermon distilled the moisture with which the night air was heavily laden, and nightly the fertilizing dews refreshed the land. It will be like that. It will be like as the small warm rain of spring time touching the earth with new life till you can see things grow. The presence of the Jew will be like that.

The Church's Part in the New Order.

The Church will have a part in the *administration of this Jew kingdom*. It is directly associated with the King, who rules over the Jew and the world. The word Church is used for all who are trusting Jesus Christ as their Saviour, from all communions and from outside of all.

It will probably be found to include all in every generation and every nation and tribe who have been true to God, and to all the light that has come to them, and so have been redeemed by the precious blood of Calvary, and united in the real Church.

All these have been caught up and away at the approach of Christ to the earth. For the one thing that counts that day is the Blood of Christ. And that is the one thing that makes the real Church, indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

But *not all of these* will be privileged to help in the service of the kingdom days. That is to say, all may if they *will*. Any one *may* have that blessed, coveted privilege. It is reserved for those who are called and chosen and faithful. Those who having accepted the *call* to salvation, have been *faithful* to the Master in the thing He *chose* for them to do.

But please note keenly that there is nothing arbitrary, no partiality, about this. It is not chiefly a matter of rewarding those who have followed fully and faithfully. The matter of

reward enters in, but almost unconsciously, not as the chief thing. These who have followed fully *can* serve. They have the needed qualities.

Following simply, fully, when the road is narrow, and the thorns sharp and near, and the crowd going the other way, and the air chilly, and the sharp-edged stones cutting one's feet, and more of that sort of thing; *that* sort of following grows the traits that are necessary in those who help in conducting the affairs of the kingdom. It's solely a matter of *faithfulness*, joyous faithfulness, either through the actual tribulation, or through the tribulation *experience* that comes to every one who will ring true.

Now these are directly associated with Jesus the King in conducting the affairs of the kingdom. Their headquarters will be somewhere in the heavens, with Jesus, but their activity on the earth. They will have their changed bodies, their resurrection bodies. In these they will go at will as they are sent.

Swift as thought, here and there, recognized and welcomed and loved, they will go. With their knowledge of the Word of God, and His ways, and especially with the fund of experience gathered in their former life on the earth, they will go teaching the word, steadying, strengthening, comforting, and directing.

Swift as thought can travel, they will be up in the King's own presence, then back to earth, here and yonder. It will be a wondrous ministry. They'll be so grateful for the grace that

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held them steady in preparation for this most blessed service. The Forty Days of Jesus' experience between the resurrection and ascension give the simple illustration of the power of their new bodies, and of their blessed ministry among men.

Same Natural Laws.

Now a little about the kingdom itself. *The natural laws of nature and of life will, of course, remain as they are, unchanged.* After that tremendous upheaval in the heavens and the earth attending Christ's arrival on earth, things will resume their usual rhythm under the divine creative touch. The great basic laws of the heavens will remain the same, the laws that keep the whole solar system aswing. The sun and moon and stars will go their daily, nightly errand for men.

But there will be certain beneficent changes seen, whether due to the heavenly lights or to the atmospheric conditions of the earth, or both. The sun will give a stronger, clearer light, though without an undue, unwholesome excess of heat. The moon will shine more brightly. The rhythm of the seasons will continue. There will be a fine tempering of the elements, the rainfall and the dew and the winds, so as to bring only good results.

There will result a renewed fertility to the soil, and the destruction and absence of poisonous growths. The blight of drought, of un-

tempered heat, and destructive storms will be gone. Malarial swamps will change under the new light of sun and moon. All these are unnatural. They were not in God's Eden earth. They came with the break of touch with God. The curse of sin will be removed.

The natural *round of human life* will continue as before. All the sweets of family life will continue, but in the finer atmosphere of purified love. Home life with its sacred privacies, the exquisite charm of the fireside circle, the constant miracle of growth and development, these will remain the very heart and center of all human life. The delights of friendship, of social intercourse, of music, of the beautiful, the cultivation of one's tastes and powers, and the rare privilege of service, these will know finer growths in the new moral atmosphere. Schooling, growing, learning, industry, exchange of products will continue, of course, for these belong to natural human life. The delight of work will be discovered anew. It is only drudgery that is unnatural, too much work, more than one's share, and the absence of the finer motive.

There will be the cultivation of the soil, of plant life and animal life. But there will be an intelligent, thoughtful interest in all of this, a due regard for the earth itself, the soil, and the future, and for all the people concerned. The cultivation will take all this into account, not simply individual interest, and not selfish ambition.

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And *organized human life* will be on the natural basis. The family is the unit. Originally the nation was simply an extension of the family principle. The group of families about the original stem made the clan, the group of clans the tribe, and the group of related tribes the nation. So natural life will be organized on its own natural law, each nation living its own characteristic life.

Geographical and racial and language affinities, and natural related interests, will control the national organization and life. The earnest attempt now being made in Paris by the statesmen there, and the remarkable gathering of specialists with them, to recognize these lines in adjusting boundaries is a working out of the principle that will have full sway in the new order.

Certain Moral Changes.

But there will be *certain radical moral changes*. There will be *changes in the unseen spirit atmosphere*, or surroundings, of our earth. Satan will be under restraint. He who started the Eden break, and did his best in the wilderness with the New Man to do his worst, he is under bonds. He, whom our Lord Jesus spoke of as the prince of this world, is out of action, absolutely out.

By simple logical inference the demons are out too. They are included with their chief. It is interesting that evil demon activity is recognized

and freely acknowledged in non-Christian lands as not in Christian. The extent and intensity of demon activity in all of our life is probably not fully understood nor appreciated by any one.

In the story of Job there is a clear statement of the inspirational power in human life of Satan working behind the scene, unseen and unsuspected. War, that is, the wrong selfish attack of force upon others to satisfy evil ambition, and wild destructive storms, and disease, are directly traced to Satanic inspiration.

Though Satan can do nothing without human consent, yet he is the inspiration, direct or indirect, of all distinctively Satanic traits,—lying, deceit, dishonesty, selfishness, hatred, bitterness, envy, jealousy, intrigue, lust, and so on through the horribly long familiar list. The whole propaganda against God, questioning His love and faithfulness and direct interest, and suggesting criticism, suspicion, dislike and hatred of God, all this will cease. The mere absence of all this will make an incalculable difference in the moral atmosphere of the earth.

Then on the other side, there will be *a positive change in the character of men generally*. There will be a new spirit in the race. The Holy Spirit will be poured out upon *all* men. The classical bit in Joel had a *beginning* at Pentecost. It will have real fulfilment in the new day coming. The transformation of the believing Jewish thousands in those opening chapters of Acts will extend to all.

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A spirit of love and consideration will take possession of men. Instead of selfishness will be a real brotherliness. Instead of cowardice and slavish fear will be courage and fearlessness. There will be a common recognition of God's unfailing tender love, and a deep reverence for God, and for God's Word, and for God's other children. A fine culture of the spirit will displace rudeness and boorishness.

There will be brotherly help for the poor, the deficient, and the backward. And a detestation of the ignoble, the selfish taking advantage of others. It will be a penitent, changed, God-fearing world. That is to say, all this will be the blessed commonplace. It apparently will not be universal, but it will be the rule. And no doubt it will work out *gradually*, after the initial start.

There is one divorce, at least, that will be nullified at once, the divorce between God and our common daily life. Satan secured that divorce long ago. It will promptly be declared null and void. And so all life will be changed by the happy reunion. And God will have the desire of His heart in the new Eden.

A great discovery will be made, that love for God and love for one's fellows are the same thing. The theologian's emphasis on love to God, and the sociologist's emphasis on love to others will be out of date. Love for God working out in love for others will be understood as the real thing.

Then there will be *certain mental changes* accompanying these moral changes. There will be a new mental alertness and keenness. The veil will be taken from off the minds of people. It will be like the lifting of a fog. People will see and understand better. There will be quicker and keener mental processes.

Dullness to truth, lack of discernment of moral issues, and of God's purposes in life, misunderstanding, ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, will give way to the opposite of these. These will all be *moral* changes in the mental realm, affecting the mental life. Individual gifts and traits and tastes and likes will remain as they naturally are, but be more full and free than before.

Certain Physical Changes.

There will also be *certain marked physical changes* of a blessed sort. There will be healing of physical ailments by divine power, blindness, deafness, lameness, dumbness, and all disease and weakness. There will be universal cessation of death, probably extending gradually. Death at the age of one hundred will be regarded as untimely.

There will be a cessation of disease, and a marked increase of health and vigour and consequent length of life. Quite probably the great ages of the days before the flood will become common again. All this, with the cessation of

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war, will lead to a great increase in population.

But under the changed conditions the earth will show what it can do in sustaining a large population. Its chance in this will have come. The Malthusian theory will be in the discard, with all its theoretical cousins. The soil and man will have a chance. God is right after all.

But man will become again master of nature, as originally planned. Discoveries of its resources and power have come slowly and laboriously through the long years. As they have come life has been brightened and eased. The electric current alone has done so much. Now all this sort of thing will come more readily. It will come, of course, through effort and study. That's the delight of it. And so conditions of life will be eased and bettered.

In all this we shall find that the Gospel days were simply advance days, sample days, of the kingdom, *in part*. The healing, the ordering of death to be gone, the mastery over storms and nature, the curbing of demon activity, the teaching and preaching, the feeding and binding up of broken hearts, all this was simply Jesus wooing men up to God's way and God's order of things. The fog was blown aside a bit, and a glimpse given of the Kingdom plan when once the King had sway.

Naturally all this will make a decided change in *the moral atmosphere of the earth*. Some one

may think it is splitting hairs to talk about the *moral* atmosphere of the earth. But personal experience makes this quite clear.

I remember returning one afternoon to the thickly congested portion of a popular summer resort where service held me for some weeks. We had had a long motor ride out in the pure country air. On returning the air seemed close and oppressive, though the early evening breeze had sprung up.

At first it seemed as though it was merely the physical air that was different from the pure country air away from the dense crowds. Then the impression came and grew, and on reflection deepened into conviction, that the difference was in the *moral* atmosphere. The wickedness of the resort is a matter of common talk, though earnest effort has put a strong legal and moral restraint upon it.

It was as though unseen evil spirit beings swarmed, and made the atmosphere oppressive to one's *spirit*. Repeated experiences in European cities, and in non-Christian lands, not to speak of our own country, confirm the conviction of an evil moral atmosphere about the earth.

Now the absence of the evil spirits from the chief on, and the marked presence of the Holy Spirit, will act doubly to change the atmosphere morally. And this in time will have an enormous subtle influence upon physical life and upon character. The mere absence of saloons and public houses, of opiate dens and gambling

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houses, and the like, will have an enormous influence on the moral atmosphere.

Changed Ideals and Circumstances.

And the commonly recognized and accepted *ideals of life* will be wholly changed. There will be a new moral quality in all community life, instinct with a robust vigour. A spirit of brotherliness will dominate. While there will be the freest play to individuality, there will be an earnest loyalty to the interests of all, and especially the poor and neglected and deficient. There will be combinations in all activities, for that is normal, but they will be unselfishly wholesome in their spirit.

And this will work out gradually and naturally certain changes in *the common circumstances of life*. The ideal of community life to-day is the city, commonly so regarded, though not by any means universally so. The cities of all the world have grown in size enormously of late decades.

The opportunities and advantages and conveniences of city life have been drawing the vast crowds. The blend of city and country life as the real ideal has been much sought after by the moneyed people who could have what they want. And it is everywhere being increasingly sought in city suburbs.

It is interesting to recall the ideals common in the palmy days of Hebrew civilization. They were what we would call to-day a *simple agri-*

cultural and pastoral people. There were no great cities. The country was the unit of life and the ideal. And these were God's people, with what might be thought of as His ideals in this regard.

In the idealized picture at the close of John's Revelation the center of community life is a *city*. But mark keenly, it is a *garden-city*. The Eden ideal was a garden. This Revelation ideal is a city. It is not built nor organized as are any of our great characteristic world cities.

It would seem to blend the ripe culture and the conveniences of city life with the simplicity and naturalness and greater purity physically of country life. The first man was a gardener. The second Man, who came as leader, was an artisan, yet in a country village, probably with a bit of garden close to the dwelling.

Now there are certain changes that we are sure of in city life. The city slum, our point of closest contact with the heathen world, will certainly go. There will be proper housing and drainage, and ventilation and environment. There will be better food. For commercialism of the hurtful sort will not be tolerated.

The unrestrained commercial instinct, for instance, that takes certain portions out of the wheat that so flour may profitably be stored up in immense quantities without danger of spoiling, will give way in the interest of better nutrition and health. And that will naturally make changes in certain productive enterprises. The

foods that suffer deterioration by being chemically prepared and changed to make a nicer looking, more salable, though less nutritious, sometimes hurtful, product, will come under the ban. Excessive prices, and the manipulation of the market in their interest, will be done away with.

Excessive forced cut-throat competition in trade will be displaced by a wholesome natural rivalry. Thoughtfulness and closer application will make better goods, and these will get better prices. And frugality will give advantages. The schools and home life will get countless children out of present-day factories. The hours of labour will be such as to permit home enjoyment, and personal culture and leisure. Wages will be adjusted fairly to a man's labour and skill and care.

Under such changed conditions men will probably discover and develop personal traits and power they had not known they possessed. And this will lead to an easier mastery of nature's hidden forces. Modern conveniences, lighting, plumbing, transportation, and the like, will probably be more and better, and be within the reach of all, country and city alike. For increased knowledge of nature's laws and stores, and our fuller, better touch with nature, will bring us helps of which we haven't yet dreamed, though prepared for our use by the creative hand.

Changes in Nature.

There will be certain changes *in nature*. We

don't know the earth as it came fresh from the hand of our Father. Oh, it's a beautiful world as we do know it. The starry twinklers in the wondrous blue overhead, the yearly miracle of spring, in swelling bud and catkin and the green blade out of the brown soil, the beauty of snow crystal, the far view over the hills and down the valleys—it's a rarely beautiful world. And we love it.

But it's not as it was. The hurt of sin is everywhere. The geologist finds it in the rocks, the astronomer in the stars, the botanist in the flowers. The orchardist must plan to offset its ravages in his fruit, and the farmer in the soil and in stock breeding. It's a world of beauty, but a hurt, a scarred beauty.

Is nature conscious of it? Does she suffer? There's a touching reference to this by the philosopher of the early Church who must have loved nature's beauty though he never refers to it. His sensitive ear can hear slow moaning of pain in the whole creation. His heart is hurt by the sense of pain in nature, but a prophetic pain, as though the birth-pain of a new, finer restored nature.¹

The change in the light of the sun and moon will bring great changes in nature. Increase of light, with its healing balm, will dry up the swamp, heal the poisonous growths, give renewed fertility to the soil, and to all good growths.

¹ Romans 8: 20-22.

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And the lower animal life will share the blessed results. Beasts noted for ferocity and treachery and poison will be changed. Sin breeds antagonism. And antagonism breeds weapons of defense. And these uncontrolled become weapons of offense. Meat-eating beasts will take to a diet of herbs, so affecting their disposition. There will be a cessation of cruelty to animals by man, and of danger to man from animals. A sweet fellowship will again spring up between man and beast and in all nature.

Threefold Purpose of the Kingdom.

The *purpose of the Kingdom* is intensely practical, as is everything that God plans. It is a threefold purpose. It is first of all a *time of opportunity*. It will give opportunity to test God's own plan for the earth and for man. God's plan has never yet had a fair chance.

Men will get really acquainted with God's way of doing things, and His wondrous plan for us. In this it will be a time of vindication. No one has been so much slandered and criticized unfairly as God. Men will be having a real taste of the plan in the heart of God for things down here.

Then it is a time of opportunity for man and for the earth. Man has been hampered by generations of inherited tendencies of a not good sort. It is true, full true, and ever will be, that as any one follows simply and fully all the light

that comes, there comes unfailingly the strength to walk in the light. And there comes more light, and then more strength.

Yet the race has been sorely hindered by sin in the world. The Kingdom time will be a time of rare opportunity for men on God's own plan. And it will be an opportunity, too, for the earth, for nature, to do her best, unhurt by sin and by sin-hurt man's ignorance and crude immaturity. The original Eden plan will have free swing, fullest opportunity for nature and man and—reverently—for God Himself.

The second purpose fits in with this. It is *to teach men about our great wondrous God*. Men don't know God. That's the greatest bother, the chief hindrance. That's a bit of Satan's most devilish cunning. If men only *knew* God clearly, it would make the most radical difference. Now it's to be a time of making God really known to men.

The Jews will be the great teacher-nation. They will have a passion for making God known. With all their rare talent and intensity and aggressiveness, touched by the Holy Spirit, they will be utterly devoted to this. And the Church will have a big share from its headquarters up in the heavens. Every redeemed child of God *may* help just as far as he can in that blessed ministry.

It will be a time of world-wide evangelization. Only that word will take on a finer, deeper, simpler meaning. The evangel is the story of

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God's love told out in terms of action, of sacrifice and blood, told in the living language of Nazareth and Calvary, and the Third Morning After. It will be a new *evangelization* of the world *till* all men shall understand the throbbing heart of God. They will come to know that Jesus was God all gone to heart for men.

There are two periods of world-wide evangelization in the old Book of God, the present Church period, and the coming Kingdom period. The immediate objective of the Church is to make God's Jesus known to all. The Kingdom time takes up the unfinished task and makes a full, clean, well-done job of it.

There's a third purpose which likewise twines in with these. It is *to put down all opposition to God's blessed rule of love*. Christ must reign until He has put down, and put out, utterly out of action, all contrary rule and authority and power. The only force used will be moral suasion, supplemented by love's help.

The language used intimates that it will be a gradual process. God wants to win His way. He wants every man, of his own free choice and action, to cut with every un-Godlike thing, and to let Himself come into His own place in man's life; and so everything contrary to God is to be abolished.

The length of time the Kingdom runs is closely connected with its purpose. It is said to be a thousand years. This is spoken of in one place only, and stated there six times. It is interest-

ing that this phrase is the basis of the word millennium, most commonly used for the Kingdom.

The time at once suggests the chief thought. It is to be sufficient for a good try-out of the original Eden plan, and also for the fullest opportunity to man under changed conditions and for the earth as well.

It should be noticed that this coming order of things commonly called the Kingdom or Millennium is *not the final thing*. There is to be a loosing out of Satan again that men may make choice. The one thing God insists upon is personal choice, utterly free choice. He wants only what is freely given.

Then there comes the final crisis, and the final decisive defeat of evil. Then occurs the resurrection of all not raised before, the burning up of the old earth and heavens, and the making of a new earth and heavens. And the final thing is not the Kingdom, nor the Church, though these have a hallowed memorial place.

"Just Beginning."

The final thing is God's own ideal, *a family*, a home. Men will be gathered about the Father as the family gathers about the fireside in the evening of the day. And they see His face. And His Name, that is, His character, His likeness, is in their faces.

The Book begins with God, and man in God's image, in friendly intercourse, in a garden. It

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ends with man gathered lovingly about God the Father in a garden city. They are closest friends, as only those akin and alike can be. The tree of life has grown into a grove of trees. God is Victor. The sacrifice of the Only Begotten was not in vain. Calvary has fertilized and enriched Eden.

Yet in the midst of the Book's most winsome picture is something else, a something very painful; but it's there, a lake of fire. It is kindled by free choice, choosing wrongly, and persisting incorrigibly in that choice. God's Book is faithful to the last leaf.

Such is the picture in these old pages, bold in outline, clear in detail, rich in warm colouring. It will be noted how its parts fit together. It makes a simple, natural, symmetrical whole. It is sane and practicable and workable. It takes into account actual conditions and needs, and meets them.

And even more, yes, much more, it gives a sufficient basis for the belief that the picture can be made a thing of life. The power and the pledge of God are back of it. It will be by direct divine intervention.

It all centers in Jesus. He has never yet failed in anything He put His hand to, in old time Syrian days, or since. And wherever He is known there's confidence in Him. His Name pledges the thing.

And so that world-wide prayer will have brought its answer. That murmur of music

through the ages and around the earth has found its antiphonal response in the reality of life. The Kingdom will have come. The New Order of Things will have begun.

And if ever haunting fear stretches its crafty chill hand up on the thermometer of your hope, ask the first Jew you meet. He knows. You'll have no trouble finding one wherever you are. He can tell. He *does* tell, not with the eloquent tongue of his mouth, but the yet more eloquent tongue of his presence.

The Jew is a perpetual miracle, God's continuous miracle. Indeed as you think into it, as great a miracle as any ever done, if not greater and greatest. The tooth of time hungrily biting has made no impression on his *racial identity*. You may not believe in the inspiration of the Bible, but you are forced to believe in the racial inspiration of the Jew, plenary inspiration, through the direct supernatural touch of the Holy Spirit.

Long ago time and Satanic hatred made a working agreement to get rid of the Jew, racially. They have done their best to kill him off, or, failing in that, to merge his identity as a Jew into that of other peoples. But he is stronger in numbers, and in racial consciousness, and in the action of life to-day than ever.

The Jew is the keystone of the Kingdom arch. God has miraculously preserved him. He is essential to the plan. When the Kingdom comes the Jew is here waiting to fit into the keystone

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niche. The Jew's mere presence says, "*The Kingdom is coming.*"

The officer in command of a section of trenches, and a sergeant, were making their rounds during a comparative lull in the firing, "somewhere in France." All at once the officer almost stumbled over the limp form of a young bugler. "Done for?" asked the sergeant. "Yes," was the reply, "the poor fellow's evidently 'gone west.'"

But he hadn't quite yet. There was a momentary flashing up of the fast ebbing vitality. The ear caught the words spoken. The lips moved and the officer bent tenderly to catch the words: "Gone west? . . . yes, sir . . . but . . . not done for, sir . . . it's *only just beginning* . . . I see . . . *Him* . . . and . . . and *mother.*"

Then a wondrous smile lit the boy's face, and then the head dropped back. Things had *begun* for him. Things will be "just beginning" when Jesus comes.

V

THE EVIDENCE IN THE CASE

The Authoritative Book.

A book is a judge. It is a tribunal. It makes decisions. It settles disputes. It gives a starting-point. It gives a common ground of agreement where there are differences. I mean of course an authoritative book, which is commonly accepted as a standard.

Experts have certain books always at hand. The lawyer has Blackstone and Coke, the physician Gray, the merchant Bradstreet and Lloyd's List, the sailor Mahan, the soldier Wellington, the philosopher Kant, the historical student Grote and Green and Motley, the minister of the Gospel the Bible, and so on. The authoritative book becomes the starting-point, the working basis, backed by the expert's own experimental work which corroborates and interprets it to him.

Then there come to be experts whose interpretation of the book is accepted by others. These experts are men of disciplined mental powers, of much study, keen discernment and impartial poise of spirit. They seek patiently and tirelessly to know and discern and to in-

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interpret impartially the meaning of the standard book.

The thoughtful man goes to his book. One must start somewhere. He must get his feet. He needs to know whatever there is that is absolutely dependable. He must protect himself against misunderstanding and resulting injury. Whether he's selling a big bill of goods, or preparing an important case for the court, or trying to find how the belief and practice of his own time connects with those of past times and other nations; or simply trying to do the higher thing, live an intelligent, strong Christian life, and be a true leader.

The book connects him with the past. It puts him in working touch with other men of his particular world. A man can live only one generation of time, and be in one place at a time himself. And that's only one link in the long chain. If his judgment is to be reliable, he must get in touch with the *facts* that concern what he's thinking about. He wants the facts that are really *beyond dispute*. He wants both the facts of the long past and the facts of the rest of his world.

A book of this standard sort deals with facts and with principles. These two are blood brothers. The fact is the concrete illustration of a principle, and the principle interprets the meaning of the fact. A fact is a tremendous thing. It is the one fixed quantity of life. It is true, of course, or else it isn't a fact. It can't be

pushed aside nor ignored. The man who tries that finds after a bit that he has simply pushed himself aside out of the real current. The fact remains.

A fact is always true, yet truth is not simply a fact nor a collection of facts. Truth is a fact seen in connection with other facts that belong with it. Truth is a circle of facts so adjusted that each is seen, not simply by itself, but in its relation to its brother facts. A fact out of its relation may lead a man badly adrift.

Water won't run up hill. That's a very commonplace fact. Yet there is probably not one of us but has seen a stream or column or pipeful of water moving steadily, decidedly, up an incline, and perhaps a very steep, sharp incline, too. Because water seeks its own level. That's another fact about water.

The column of water seen moving upward is connected with a larger body of water. Like a man, it doesn't live to itself. It can't. The man may try to, and will find himself badly out when the reckonings are footed up. The water is true to the simple law of its being. It's part of something else. And the connection controls its movements.

What is a fact of a body of water standing unconnected, that it won't run up hill, ceases to be a fact as it comes into active connection with a larger body of water. It does run up hill. It gets into right relation with what it belongs to.

Now the thoughtful Christian man wants to be

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true and to live true. He earnestly desires to be sure of his footing. He may be a leader among men in things of the Christian life, or he may simply be living his life in a shut-away corner, with a limited circle of influence. But he wants to know about the simple vital things in a dependable way, that so he may be true, and always ring true, and not find that he's made some radical breaks or slips when the score's finally figured up.

How *can* he know? Every man can't be a specialist. He may have to figure a good bit on keeping the roof overhead, on bed and bread, for his little group and the like. How can he *know*? There perhaps was never a time when moral issues were more obscured by beautifully shaded gray clouds than to-day.

Theories of life are as thick as shells have been in the air in Northern France lately. Clouds of subtle poison gas float about threatening to disturb one's normal thinking about things where vital principles are at stake. One is eager sometimes for a spirit gas-mask that will supply pure, healthful air, so he can keep his balance, and see true and straight.

Pretty much everything that our fathers unquestioningly reckoned as settled in the matter of religious belief is being questioned, or openly attacked, or ignored. How *can* a man know? I'm thinking most of the common folk who are absorbed in life's daily tasks and yet want to know, and to be true.

Well, there's a Book. It lays peculiar claim to being authoritative. And its authority is accepted by more people, experts and commoner alike, than that of any other. It is the one Book that deals directly and distinctively with a man's inner life and conviction, his connection with God and with his fellows, and with the great facts of the past, and even more of the future, clear to the unending end.

It's not really a large book. It's not written in technical language, but in the simple speech of the common crowd. It's broken up into parts, making it easier to get hold of what's there. It is full of the sort of incidents right out of life that take hold of one's interest and heart at once. It has been put into our mother tongue by the concerted work of thoughtful, reverent, scholarly men of the highest standing.

And I want to say as thoughtfully as I can that it is my deep conviction that a simple working mastery of this Book's contents can be got by any one who will set himself to it. One's life may be chock full of the day's work, bringing him to nightfall ready and eager for rest. It is so with every one worth while, as a rule. Yet I am quite clear that the man of ordinary intelligence, who will set himself to it, simply and earnestly, as he does to anything that his heart's in, can get a comprehensive grasp of what is in this Book.

A bit of spare time daily, some simple, comprehensive plan of reading, a reverent spirit, an

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open mind, and above all, a willingness to square one's spirit and daily practice with the Book's spirit and teachings—these will bring to any one, however busy and undisciplined by special study, a working knowledge of the contents and spirit and purpose of this remarkably simple Book of God.

Just now we want to turn to this Book for only one thing. A thing on which it speaks with a degree of positive certainty nothing short of startling. And yet it's a thing on which good, thoughtful men, who think about such things, seem less agreed than about anything else; and on which the man who has studied most speaks with the most caution. I refer to the future. Not the final future of the next life, but the future run of events on this earth before the wind-up comes.

One of the most striking, most outstanding, things of this Book is that it speaks definitely and distinctly about future events on the earth, and speaks of them, too, with a positiveness and definiteness that almost makes one gasp. It is the one thing conservative books avoid doing, as a rule. And this is the most conservative of books by all common consent. Yet there is here this daring feature that marks it quite off from all others.

It seems very plain to one reading thoughtfully through this Book that there is here a desire, yes, more, a settled dominating purpose to tell about a program of events, distinctly future, to be

worked out on our earth. It is not simply a program of things which God purposes shall come, but, also, quite distinct from that, of things that are heart-breaking to Him, and yet which He plainly sees will come.

They are things which will work out of that utter freedom of action by man which God unvaryingly insists upon. This program runs through the Book from end to end, distinct and clear. It grows steadily in intensity of statement and in wealth of detail up to the end.

Now what I have attempted to do here is quite simple. I did it first of all for myself, to get some clear settled conviction, this way or that. The putting it in this shape on paper was an afterthought. It is this: to attempt to trace out from end to end the statements of this sort, to get all of them, and then to put them together in what seemed the logical connection, and find out just what the result is.

I should say that I tried to do this honestly, utterly regardless of the familiar theories on the subject, and without attempting to make a theory to fit things into. I have not even attempted to reconcile all that has been found, nor to explain what seems unlikely, but simply to get the statements into what seemed the common-sense logical order, and so let these Oriental pages tell their own story to us Westerners, in the full connected Western fashion.

And I have not tried to discuss the *probabilities* of this program in view of the present world

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conditions and outlook. That would be a fascinating road to travel. But it is so full of speculation pits and side-ditches that I have thought it would make a cleaner job to stick to the one thing, and get that as clear and simple as possible.

And I confess honestly that I am not eager to have any one simply accept what I have put down here, profoundly as I have come to believe it to be, in the main, an accurate interpretation. Indeed I would much rather that something else were done. And that is, that others reading here may attempt to do for themselves what I have tried for myself.

How to Get the Story of the Book.

As a possible help to such independent digging I want to put down here the things that I am clear are essentials to getting the story of the Book, in regard to this particular bit of study, or any other.

First of all, let me say that I have a deep settled conviction that this Book, our Bible, is the very Word of God. It has been inspired in a distinctive sense by the Holy Spirit through the men who wrote, as has no other book. That conviction has deepened and grown steadily with the years of study until it is quite unshakeably settled.

And with that conviction has grown an admiration, a reverence, and an abiding love for this remarkable, solitary book. And there has

been deepening, too, the settled conviction that what it really records of future events on this earth will actually occur. And, if this be so, it is wholly a matter of finding out in simple connected terms just what it does say.

The one thing to emphasize is getting as near as possible to *the accurate translation* into our common English talk of what is here. And then gathering up what seems the simple sense of what is here without any speculations, or attempts to fit it into any theories, or to explain away what seems the plain meaning.

The common man who knows only English is unusually blest in the translations of the Bible which we have. Whether he reads the old King James version, or the English Revision of 1881, or the American of 1901, he can depend on the substantial accuracy as to all vital statements of what he reads.

Yet there is no translation work that cannot be helpfully added to by study. And I have been so bold as to make paraphrases or free translations many times, translation really of *thought* rather than of mere words. I have done this only after most painstaking, repeated prayerful digging into and brooding over the language underneath. And I have tried most searchingly to be utterly impartial in doing it, for I was trying to find the truth for myself.

The spirit in which one goes at the study of this Book will affect the results in a most radical way. There needs to be a spirit of *candid open-*

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mindedness to what he may find, even though it cut straight across the grain of what he has been thinking or living.

Of course a man can search for statements to bear out his opinions, or practice. Plainly this is thoroughly unscientific and unscholarly, as well as being unreliable and opposed to good common sense. Yet there is nothing commoner in actual practice. *Or*, he may hold in abeyance whatever views or theories he may have been accustomed to believe, and so at least honestly attempt to bring an open mind to the study. Mere mental honesty will require him to accept what appeals to him as being true.

But there is something deeper yet than this, more radical, and harder to fit into actually. *The life must be squared with the moral standards of the Book.* One must keep in full obedient touch in his daily practices with the Holy Spirit's leadings in his own inner being.

For there's a quality in the old Book different from all other books. It makes a *personal appeal*. There's a living though inaudible voice (inaudible to the physical ear) speaking out of its pages to one's inner heart. Clearly and earnestly, though so quietly, it calls one insistently up to the moral standard of the Book. And a man's keenness of insight into the Book will be in exact ratio to his obedience to that quiet voice.

You can't live crooked and think straight. I'm not thinking of the wicked man especially,

in saying that; nor of the nominal Christian man, but of the earnest Christian. If the way he chooses to go *crooks* off even a little from the straight line of the Spirit's leading he will not be as keen to get that Spirit's meaning in the Book.

Full rhythm of one's spirit with the gracious Holy Spirit, whether He is speaking in the Book or in your own inner being, this is essential to insight into this rare Book which has been inspired by the same Spirit who dwells in one's heart.

Then *the plan* you follow in reading the Book makes an enormous difference. Most people have no plan. The commonest habit is to pick out verses and chapters with little or no thought of their connection. It's remarkable how you can always get something to help, no matter how you go at the Book. It is startling how few have a *grasp* or *mastery* of the contents of the Book.

I don't mean, by that, a scholarly grasp nor a profound insight into it. I mean something very simple, so simple that it is within reach of the busiest man or woman who has had no special schooling above the ordinary. It is this, a simple working knowledge, in a general way, of the contents of the Book, and of how the parts fit together. It's not a big book. Such masterful grasp of it can be got by any one. And it fairly floods the pages with light in a most surprising and enjoyable way.

It can all be put in this way. There need to be

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four things, simple yet radical, and essential: an act, a purpose, a habit, and a plan. The act of glad surrender of will and life to the mastery of Jesus, and to the inner voice of His Holy Spirit. The purpose, in everything, with no exceptions, to do what He wishes. The habit of getting a bit of quiet, unhurried time daily with the Book, when you're not all tired out. And then a fitting together all you do and get by means of some simple, comprehensive plan.

It is essential that we get into *the atmosphere of the Book*. It is intensely and characteristically a Jewish book. The expert in studying a painting or piece of sculpture, to get at its value, seeks to get the point of view of the artist. Just so we should read these old pages as a godly, reverent Jew would listen to Moses or Isaiah or Amos, as he spoke his messages to the crowd.

We ought to get the habit of reading them as an earnest, believing Jew of later times read them, like saintly Simeon or the aged Anna. We should study to see and hear as Daniel and Matthew and Paul and John saw and heard, *if* we are to get the real spirit and intent of what is here.

We Westerners are Gentiles in the common language of the Book. That is, we are not Jews. We are non-Jews. We are far removed in time and space and atmosphere from these writers. Our outlook and ambitions and education are as different as the West still is from the East.

Our common Western point of view is, well,

if not actually antagonistic, it is at least in sharpest contrast to the Oriental, from every angle of approach. Naturally to breathe in the genius of the Book and grasp its distinctive full meaning one must get into its atmosphere.

Of course any one can come here and find Jesus as his Saviour, and know the blessedness of sins forgiven, and of daily strength and light on his practical problems. This is unchangeably, perennially, blessedly true wherever the Book goes. But if we are to become full-grown men, mature in our Christian life and belief, we need to push on to a closer acquaintance with what God tells us in His Word.

The thoughtful reader quickly finds that the whole atmosphere of this Book of God is intensely Jewish. It is startlingly so. He comes perhaps to wonder if it is prophetically so, if it is in itself an intimation to us intense non-Jewish Gentile crowds, of something of a startling sort coming some day in the old earth.

The writers are Jews, and naturally are absorbed with Jewish ambitions. They have the Jewish passion for a Jewish kingdom and for a Jewish world-dominion. And the passion is marked with that intensity peculiarly Oriental which can see nothing else.

Yet, though so intensely Jewish the Book has a world grasp and outlook. It combines intense narrowness with surprising breadth. It looks out over the whole earth, and on down through the whole swing of coming time, yet always from

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the Jew angle. The Jewish colouring is never out of the writer's eye nor out of his ink-pot.

How to Get a Mastery of the Book.

Now, there is a *plan of Bible reading* which ought to be more used, habitually used. It is the scientific method. It is the scholar's method. And yet it is also the simplest of methods, suited for us common folk, for the busy man, for young people, and for children. It brings out the fascination of the Book as does no other. I refer to *broad reading*.

It is very much better to use a revised version, simply because it is printed in paragraphs, if for no other reason. It isn't cut up into small bits. It runs along more like any other book, and the paragraphs make a natural division of the subject matter. It is easier to get the run of the story.

Broad reading means reading the Bible as you would read a story book. Of course, there should be a reverence here as with no other book. That is to say, you begin at the beginning and run through rapidly, by the page, regardless of chapter or verse divisions.

Read rapidly, not hastily, to get the story, just as in the Associated Press dispatches of the war, or in any reading. Don't try to understand it all, just now, nor to remember it all. Just get the run of it as a story. You may read Genesis through at three or four or five sittings.

When you get to the end of Genesis don't stop

there. Keep right on into Exodus. It is a continuous narrative. Exodus is like the second section of the story. And so keep on through the Old Testament. It is one continuous story from Genesis to the close of Esther.

That is, it is practically so. The books of the Chronicles go over the same ground as the books of Samuel and the Kings, from a different angle, the official angle. And Esther is a small story of happenings fitting into the larger story. Stick to the story reading throughout.

When you come to Leviticus, simply note that the first chapters tell about the offerings they were to make. Then it tells about the rules they were to follow in making these offerings, and about the priests. Then an incident is given of some trouble that happened. In that way you can have at your finger ends in a general way the story of that particular book. And so on through.

The second part of this broad reading plan is to fit the parts together. The Old Testament, of course, falls roughly into two parts. There is the story part from Genesis to Esther. Then there are certain bits that grew up in connection with the story that are gathered out and put by themselves. These form the second part of the Old Testament, commonly called the poetical and prophetic books. The Psalms that David and Asaph and others wrote are gathered together. The little books that Solomon wrote or compiled, or both, are put by themselves. These with the

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book of Job are grouped together and commonly called poetical or wisdom books.

Then the larger part of this second division is the prophetic books. These are the messages of the men we would call preachers. Most of them were spoken, and afterwards written down, in part. Some few were written only, not spoken. They were gathered out of the story and put by themselves. They really belong, of course, back in the story. Only as they are read in that way can we get their real meaning. The story of the time gives the setting of the preacher's message. And the message itself gives the local colouring to the story.

Now the second part of the broad reading plan is to fit this second part of the Old Testament back into the first part, the preacher's message back into the circumstances which led him to give it to the people.

Simply by taking note of the historical sentences in the reading of the prophecies we can turn back to the place in the story where they belong. For instance, Jeremiah tells in the beginning of his book that he wrote during the reign of certain kings. It is a simple matter to turn back to the double record in Kings and Chronicles, and read the two parts together. The Third Psalm tells, in the opening inscription, that it was written by David when he fled from Absalom his son. The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Second Samuel give the story.

There are exceptions to this statement. Some

psalms have no inscription to guide us, and some of the prophecies have only vague historical allusions, and so it takes more study to fit these into their place in the story. But the general rule holds good.

The same holds true of the New Testament. Paul's Epistles which form the bulk of the Book, after the Acts, can be fitted in with distinct accuracy as a rule, into the Book of Acts, and the others grouped in where they belong.

Now fit these parts together. Do it yourself. You may likely make some mistakes. You can check these up afterwards with some of the standard scholarly books. But the chief thing is that you are absorbing the Book. It is becoming a bit of yourself. You are breathing in its atmosphere.

You are storing your mind with that through which the Holy Spirit will speak to your own heart, answering the questions and needs of your own life. And you will be getting a picture of God, a series of pictures, fascinating pictures, of His love and patience and faithfulness. And you can come to get His plan, His ideal which He holds in His heart for the old earth.

You see it is not a plan for a day or a week, but for steady work. It should be persisted in faithfully. Out of it other plans of reading will naturally grow. As you dig into some particular sentence or verse, word by word, to extract its pieces and flavour, you will get far more, for you know its story, its setting.

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When you try to gather up the teachings of the Book on some one subject you will be familiar with the pages. You can run through rapidly, gleaning out statements and illustrations. You will come to have a broad grasp of the Book. And you will come to have a broader view and a balanced, poised judgment.

And, better yet, if you honestly meet the *tug* of the Book *in your life* you will find a keenness of spirit discernment, and a quiet, unshakeable peace in your heart, and a great quiet delight as you come to understand God and His purposes better.

One other word crowds into this brief group of suggestions. *Try to forget* what you have been taught of the meaning. You can't, of course; but *try to*. That is, let it come to you *fresh* as though wholly a new book. And so try to find *the first meaning* of what you are reading.

There are secondary meanings, of course. We are so filled up with "practical applications" and "spiritual applications" of the general truths that it is hard to hold these off, and get the first meaning as it came to those who heard when the words were spoken.

And try to get the simple first-meaning *sense*, what it meant to the man talking, and the men listening to him away back in the old time as the story was being lived. This simple, first meaning, the surface meaning, is the chief thing you want to get to really understand the Book, and God, and His purposes and plans.

Now, I've gone into this sort of reading quite a bit simply because I am eager that many may have a fresh reverent go at the old Book itself on the subject of God's future program for things on the earth, the ideal He carries in His heart for our earth.

Do you know the word *brooding*? Do you know the meaning of it? I do not mean merely the dictionary meaning, the philology of it, but the living meaning, the heart meaning? There's a gentle lady I know, with a great mother heart, who has been teaching me that meaning. It is not simply by what she has said about it, but much more by what she has been in herself as I have been quietly watching through the years, when she did not know I was watching.

I have watched her as she has been brooding over the wee tot, that plainly needs something but hasn't learned word language yet. And I have watched her with growing boys, restless, eager, impatient of restraint, yet with no ugly bad thought underneath, and again when they had plainly been disobedient and wilful and knew it was so.

Brooding in the definition of her living and action seems to mean putting a warm tender heart over another, with the will holding it steady and quiet, so as to understand *by the feel of the spirit* how things really are. It is a cultivated spirit-sensitiveness reading another's heart and spirit. It is somewhat akin to the physician's trained finger on the patient's pulse, or

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to do here is to try to find that plan of His as simply and briefly and clearly as we can. Perhaps so we can be of more use to Him. Perhaps we can more understandingly serve Him who gave His Son for us. Perhaps, too, if there be some rough weather coming we'll be able to steer the ship better, and weather the storm, if we know about it ahead, and have our compass and sailing charts in plain view, and are familiar with them.

Just now the thing we are after is to try to get what is here that is *distinctly future*. I mean to gather out only those parts or statements that any one, whatever his theories, can agree *has never yet actually happened* in the *first surface meaning* of the words. We will omit all passages of doubtful application. We will try severely to omit all speculations. We will take everything; omit nothing; and add nothing. We will try hard to see things as the writer sees them. And then gathering all these things up in what seems the natural unforced connection let the Book tell its own story, so far as we can.

We cannot be wholly unprejudiced in this, unhappily. I suppose such a man doesn't exist. But we can try honestly and severely to be. We shall not understand all, probably, for we are not Jews, and we are not living back where these men saw and dreamed and talked and wrote. We are Occidentals. And this is characteristically an Oriental Book. And the two seem

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as sharply contrasted as two different things can be.

Yet only a little reading of this Book makes it clear that there's a living spirit in it. The same Holy Spirit who graciously comes to live in us lived in men then. He guided their speech and pens. He will guide our reading and understanding. One touch of the Holy Spirit makes all the race akin, Oriental and Occidental alike. And so we may come to a practical grasp of our blessed Lord's plan for coming days, and a practical grasp of the evil one's opposition to that plan. And we can look ahead to the day of God's victory in the earth, *through* human action.

The Messages of the Long Twilight.

Turn now to the Book, this authoritative Book. I am supposing that the reader has his Bible open, preferably a revised, and is following the foot-note references.

There is a slender but distinct chain of passages¹ beginning with words spoken to Abraham and running up to the time of David. I have not quoted these. Looked at in the floodlight of the later prophetic utterances it seems clear that they have a fullness of meaning that no events thus far at all satisfy. Yet we are so accustomed to the teaching that they do find their fulfilment in the first coming of Christ and the remarkable

¹ Genesis 12: 1-3; 26: 1-5; 28: 10-15; 49: 9-11; Deuteronomy 18: 15-19; 2 Samuel 7: 16, 18, 19; 23: 3-5.

progress of Christianity, that I have omitted them in this survey.

The great bulk of teaching is in these books called prophetic. We want first to get, at a glance, the historical setting of these books. The Old Testament is almost wholly taken up with the story of the Jew nation. This is the warp into which all threads are woven. Roughly that story falls into three parts. There is *the making of the nation*, running from the Twelfth of Genesis to the close of Deuteronomy, when they are about to enter into their national domain.

There is the time of *the nation's growth* up to its greatest strength and territory and glory, in the reigns of David and Solomon. This runs from the beginning of Joshua through the first half of First Kings and to the close of First Chronicles. Then there is *the time of decline* running to the end of Ezra and Nehemiah.

It is in this third period that the prophetic books grew up. As the great kings go the great prophets come. As the night falls and darkens the stars come out. They shine clearest in the darkest hours. It's a time of both moral and material gloom growing ever denser, with some gleams of light springing up, and then things settling down again into deeper, darker gloom.

The split-up of the nation into two rival parts is followed by its complete break-up, as it is carried bleeding, utterly broken, into the land of exile. Then follows the return of some to the

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homeland, a small ragged remnant, a few pitiable thousands, straggling and struggling toward some semblance of national life.

It is in this night-time of disheartening gloom, chiefly, that something new is born, a literature, the literature of the night, really the literature of a coming morning. It fairly sparkles and dazzles with the glorious vision of the men who write. These men write by the light of stars. They see the stars, point them out, and write in their warm glad glow.

This new literature of the night, of the coming morning, falls into three parts. There are the messages before the break-up and exile. They come slow, through the slowly deepening twilight of the coming night. There are the messages written during the time of captivity when the night has settled down black and gaunt. And then there are those written as the night seems to grow less dark, and the dawn seems coming. Yet the darkness *never* yields to sunrising. The new day struggles upward in the gray east but never gets up. Let us look at these.

There are eight of these pamphlets or little books in the *first* of these groups, those written *before the exile*, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Joel.

Jonah is concerned wholly with Nineveh, and contains nothing of what we are looking for. There are four that belong together, *Amos*, *Hosea*, *Isaiah* and *Micah*. These four men quite likely were acquainted. They may have been

friends, drawn together as lonely men in a difficult time, by the same protest against common evils, the same burning hearts and the same vision.

Amos comes first in order of time. He is the evening star of the prophetic period, shining out whilst the sunlight of the fading day is yet strong. He is not a "proper" prophet trained in the schools, but a small farmer, fine-grained, thoughtful student of national affairs, who brooded over the evils of his people till the burning fire could no longer be held in.

His brief activity comes in somewhere during the fourteen years that the reigns of Uzziah of Judah and Jereboam II of Israel overlapped. He was a southerner, his home not far from Bethlehem. His messages are to Israel the northern kingdom. He spoke them in Bethel, one of the centers of the licentious idolatrous worship of the northern kingdom. Affairs there have been extremely desperate materially, and immensely more morally. His messages are full of severest criticism and denunciation of the damnable evils prevalent.

At the end comes a bit that seems clearly future.¹ It has never yet taken place. There is to be an earthquake, though that word is not used, which one quickly thinks is the one referred to in the opening sentence of the Book. But this is connected with a supernaturally dark day, the sun going down at noon. And it is connected

¹Amos 8:8-9; 9:5-15.

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also with a breaking up of the Jew nation, that is of the whole nation, northern and southern, designated here as "the house of Jacob." Yet there would be preservation of Jewish identity, in spite of their being scattered among the nations, which always tends to rub out racial identity.

But in sharp contrast there is connected with this a restoration or renationalization of the Jew. It would be through a revival of the old David dynasty. And through this restoration the newly formed Jew nation would become a leader of other nations. And with this would be a restoration of the Jew's homeland to a condition of remarkable fertility.

"In that day" is the phrase connecting these events. This phrase groups together the earthquake, the dark day, the national break-up, and the subsequent restoration. There is apparently a *period* of judgment on the Jew, when he is scattered, then a *crisis* of judgment, with the earthquake and the supernatural dark day, followed by the renationalization.

The phrase "*in that day*," which is so common in all these prophetic books, in that or some equivalent form, is found first, here, in Amos.¹ It is used first in chapter five, where the meaning seems clearly to be the time when God would be in control of affairs and would be acting to carry out *His* purposes. Those who were looking forward to it as a time of prosperity are warned that it would be a time of visitation of

¹Amos 5: 18, 20; 8: 3, 9; 9: 11.

judgment on the nation as well as the new prosperity they were anticipating.

Now the striking thing to note is that these things are clearly *grouped*. It is quite evident to any one that such a group of events has never occurred in Jewish history. If they are to occur it must be at some future time.

Hosea begins in the reign of Uzziah, probably a little later than Amos, and continues into the reign of Hezekiah. He speaks to the southern kingdom, Judah. The break-up of the northern kingdom occurs during his activity, and adds solemn emphasis to his warnings. The nation has sunk to its lowest ebb, morally, down to the Ahab standard, which hastened the doom of their northern kinsfolk. There is a vividness of illustration startling in its intensity, and in its touching upon the sacred intimacies of life. There is a fine tenderness and gracious pleading blended with severe outcry against the evil so bad and so common.

The first bit¹ puts emphasis on a time of rare blessedness *following* a visitation of judgments. The nation is to be brought into "the wilderness," that is, judged. "The valley of Achor"² is to be a "door of hope." That is, through the most drastic judgment on sin there is to be an entrance into a new life beyond, when the nation would "*sing*" as joyously as when they had got safely out of Egyptian slavery.

Now all this would not be of significance in our

¹ Hosea 2:14-23.

² Joshua 7:16-26.

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present search but for the fact that it is *coupled* directly with the winsome bit following. There is a day coming when, for their sakes, there will be a radical change in the nature of the lower animals, a change back to Eden days. Tigers and hyenas, vultures and serpents and scorpions will no longer be hurtful nor dreaded. Militarism is wholly gone. There would be the tenderest and most intimate relation between God and His chosen people.

There would be a wonderful rhythm in nature, giving great fertility to the soil and abundant crops. Listen: "I will strike the key-note of a sweet rhythm," saith the Lord. "I will respond or sing back to the plea of the heavens, and so they shall sing back to the need of the earth with dew and rain, and the earth shall respond or sing back with grain and new wine and oil, and these shall all be in full rhythm with Israel my people whom I have sown in the soil of the peoples of the earth." And yet the climax would be the eagerness with which the people would respond to God's love as He calls them His own people. "I will love these who have been so unloved."

The second bit to catch one's eye is very brief but striking.¹ The nation is to be broken up *as a nation*. It is to remain so "many days." Afterwards these conditions are to be reversed, the people to return not only to God but to the David dynasty. And this is said to come "in

¹ Hosea 3:4-5.

the latter days." There could be no more vivid description of the present condition of the Jews than here. The after-conditions certainly have not come yet.

The third bit¹ is a rarely winsome picture of a restored people enjoying not only material prosperity but God's gracious approval. It might be supposed to be simply a Jew's highly idealized dream of his people's future, possibly already realized in their history in some degree. But clearly this Jew couples it with the first bit, and so with a time of distinct restoration after the visitation of judgment.

The outlook here in Hosea is wholly Jewish. Here the Jew is broken up as a nation but not as a people. Then he is restored, and restored as a spiritually changed people, to a land of renewed fertility in which the nature of the beasts and birds are changed from being hurtful to being companions.

Isaiah's active service ran through a long period, something over forty-six years. He had access to court circles and to the king's presence. Some of his messages were given in person to the king.

It should be kept in mind in reading that these are spoken messages. Frequently they have all the directness of personal conversation, the abrupt break or transition that marks a man talking to a group where the attitude of the crowd affects the man and his talk.

¹ Hosea 14: 4-8.

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In this present survey I am taking the book of Isaiah in two parts, chapters 1-39 grouped with the pre-exile prophets, and chapters 40-66 with those after the exile. I am familiar with the objections to this by many saintly people for whose judgment I have the deepest regard. I have been led to this decision, in getting the historical setting of the messages, entirely and only from many times repeated readings. And I am following that arrangement only to make a clearer grouping of the teaching. This in no way affects the full explicit inspiration of these remarkable pages by the Holy Spirit through the writers.

Isaiah is like a great piece of music. The dominant or key note of the whole is struck clear and vibrant at the very first.¹ Then in a remarkable group of paragraphs² he gathers up the whole swing of his message, not only the plea to his people, but the full outline of the message delivered through the course of his long ministry. And then follows, through the succeeding pages, the various messages spoken at different times.

It will be noted that the topical arrangement dominates over the chronological. The writer isn't concerned with getting the messages in the order of time in which they were spoken. The time notes are really incidental. He is absorbed with the thing he's talking about. This is characteristic of all these prophetic books. It is dis-

¹ Isaiah 1.

tinctly Oriental, and is the common method still in the Orient. It is the popular method.

Now, a look at this *opening summary* of Isaiah's whole message to find any items that have not happened yet. The big thing that fills Isaiah's eye¹ is that the Jew nation is to come to a place of world leadership among all the nations of the earth. It will be through a *voluntary* acceptance of Jewish leadership by all the nations. It will be wholly a non-military leadership and all the nations will be on a non-military basis.

This is directly connected with a *visitation of judgment* sweeping over *all the earth*.² This judgment is universal and intense. Men of all classes will be terror-stricken at the evidence of God's presence and power in action before their very eyes. But it should be keenly noted that it is not a *final* judgment on evil.

It is clearly a *crisis* of judgment leading through to something else. It is connected with the Jewish world leadership, and, by simple inference, precedes it. The time when this is to come is called repeatedly "the day of the Lord," as though it meant a time when He would be in action, righting all things that are wrong, as He is not doing at the present time.

Then there is to be a visitation of judgment on *the Jew* also. It is not spoken of as a *period* of judgment but as a *crisis* of judgment.³ One would naturally connect this with events long

¹ Isaiah 2 : 2-4.

² Isaiah 2 : 10-21.

³ Isaiah 3 : 1-4 : 1.

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ago in Jew history but for the fact that here it is grouped with these other things that clearly have not happened yet. "In that day" is the connecting link throughout these paragraphs.

Then follows a picture of the new Jew nation after this crisis of judgment and as *a direct result* of it.¹ The Jewish leadership among the nations is to be wholly unlike anything ever known. The Jews are to be a radically changed people. This is to be through God's direct touch, overcoming natural ingrained traits of character. The Jew will be commonly called holy, just as to-day the Britisher is called plucky, the American aggressive, the French versatile, and the German a plodder.

Jerusalem, the Jewish capital, and so, under Jew world-leadership, reckoned the world capital, is to be marked by the visible presence of God, as was the tabernacle in the Wilderness sands. This is part of the picture of a *new order of things* on the earth *following* the crisis of judgment on the Jew and on all the nations. And all this is said to be "in the latter days."

This summary of his whole message closes with a passionate plea to the nation, mingled with sharp denunciation and solemn assurance of the certainty of the judgment that is coming.²

Now here are *five things grouped together* in this summary of Isaiah's message. There is to be a visitation of judgment on *the Jew*, running through a period of time, and then coming to a

¹ Isaiah 4: 2-6.

² Isaiah 5.

sharp crisis. There is to be a *crisis of judgment* on the *whole earth*. This is to be followed by a *new order of things* on the earth. In this new order the Jew nation is to have the place of *world-leadership*. But he is to be a wholly, radically changed Jew. The most striking thing to note here is that these things are distinctly grouped together. Certainly such a combination, if ever realized, is distinctly future.

Such, in brief, are the items in this comprehensive summary of his whole message with which Isaiah opens his book. It is followed by the account of the remarkable personal experience he had one day in the temple.¹ There was a wondrous vision of God, and in it his own life's mission pointed out to him.

Thus it will be noted that Isaiah makes a very simple grouping of his written messages. There is first the striking of the *key-note* of his message to his own generation;² then a summary of *the whole outline* of his message;³ then the remarkable personal experience through which he came to be God's messenger,⁴ and there follows the individual messages with all their glow and directness and detail, as they were given at different times.⁵

Now we want to take a brief look at these individual messages. There is a group of paragraphs running through chapters seven to twelve. While they run through at least a year's time,

¹ Isaiah 6.

² Isaiah 1.

³ Isaiah 2-5.

⁴ Isaiah 6.

⁵ Isaiah 7-35.

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they are clearly tied together by the same chain of thought, and even in the language used. It is a time of trouble when a coalition of Syria and Israel is threatening invasion of Judah and Jerusalem.¹

There is coming a judgment on the nation as a punishment.² This could refer wholly to past Jewish history. But in contrast with that, certain items stand sharply out. There is to come a great light to the nation, with great increase of numbers, and great joy because of overwhelming victory over their enemies.³

This comes directly as the result of a great king coming. He sits on the throne of *David*. His government is to be without limit of power or of time, and to be a government of peace and justice.

There is to be judgment on the enemies of the Jews after the judgment on the Jew is completed.⁴ This would seem wholly past, but for the fact that it is directly connected with a restoration of the Jew⁵ and with a decisive visitation of judgment on the whole earth.⁶ There is a strikingly vivid picture of the enemy advancing against Jerusalem,⁷ and then the destruction of the enemy. That is to say, the enemy used in a visitation of judgment on the Jew, is then

¹ Isaiah 7.

² Isaiah 7-8.

³ Isaiah 9 : 1-7.

⁴ Isaiah 10. Note verse 12 and on.

⁵ Isaiah 10 : 20-21.

⁶ Verses 23-27.

⁷ Verses 28-32.

himself judged decisively by a sharp turning of the tables.¹

Then this group of paragraphs ends with a glowing picture of Jewish restoration and of a new order of things on the earth under Jewish leadership.² There is a great King coming.³ He is of the lineage of David's family. He is most rarely equipped personally through the presence of the Holy Spirit in unusual measure. A Jewish king, yet his reign is to be extended over all the earth. His reign is absolute, meting out justice to the poor and oppressed, and to the oppressor. It is a new kind of rule. He slays the wicked. Yet it is done with the breath of His mouth.

There is a radical change in the nature of the animals that have been dreaded, the wolf and leopard, the lion and bear, the asp and the adder. There is to be an utter absence of all violence, because the knowledge of God would be so widespread.⁴ The Jew nation is to be the rallying center for all other nations, who will come of their own choice.⁵ At this time there would be a remarkable gathering of all Jews from all parts of the earth where they have been scattered.⁶ There would be utmost harmony among the Jews themselves. Those who had been their inveterate enemies will now eagerly help them back to their restored homeland. There would be changes in the Egyptian (Red) Sea and in the Euphrates

¹ Isaiah 10 : 33-34. ² Isaiah 11-12. ³ Isaiah 11 : 1-5.

⁴ Isaiah 11 : 6-9. ⁵ Isaiah 11 : 10. ⁶ Isaiah 11 : 11-16.

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River to facilitate their journey back to Palestine. It would be a similar experience to the great historic deliverance out of Egypt at the beginning of their national history.

And the section ends with a great outburst of praise.¹ Five times in the section there occurs the striking sentence "for all this His anger is not (yet) turned away but His Hand is stretched out still" (in judgment). It occurs once in the summary² and four times in this group of paragraphs.³ Now, at the close, it is changed—"for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away and thou comfortest me."⁴ The period of graduated judgment is over. The crisis of judgment at the close of the period is past. The sun is shining again. God smiles down upon a purified people, entering upon a new world ministry.

Immediately following this is a small group of paragraphs about Babylon.⁵ It would at first flush naturally be supposed that this refers to the ancient city of Babylon and the great dynasty centering there, and that it had its fulfilment centuries ago. But there are certain features plainly stated here that have not happened.

Notice: the swing of action is world-wide.⁶ The armies of the kingdoms of the nations are gathered together in Palestine and overwhelm-

¹ Isaiah 12.

² Isaiah 5 : 25.

³ Isaiah 9 : 12, 17, 21 ; 10 : 4.

⁴ Isaiah 12 : 1.

⁵ Isaiah 13, 14 : 1-27.

⁶ Isaiah 13 : 4, 5, 11.

ingly defeated there.¹ The defeat is by supernatural power, as a judgment from God, and is accompanied by a tremendous shake-up in the heavenly bodies, and as tremendous earthquakes.² This judgment is on the organized world system of evil, not on the masses of the people.³ The language used of the head of this world system here called Babylon, who is judged and defeated, could not even in florid Oriental rhetoric be used of any human being.⁴ As a direct and immediate result the Jew nation is restored, and is given a place of leadership among the nations.⁵ And this new order of things on the earth brings rest and rejoicing to the masses of the people and to the whole earth.⁶

The whole passage seems to point to a worldwide armed coalition against the Jew in Palestine, inspired by unseen evil spirit forces. And the stinging defeat is not only of the organized world system but of some spirit power behind it. I am carefully avoiding any discussion of this or its probability; only putting down what seems clearly to be here.

While there are bits here that fit into the past of the city and empire of Babylon in the Euphrates valley,⁷ clearly the passage does not at all find its fulfilment in anything recorded in

¹ Isaiah 13:4 with 14:25. These references touch only specific points. One must read the whole section repeatedly and breathe in its spirit.

² Isaiah 13:9-13. ³ Isaiah 13:14. ⁴ Isaiah 14:12-14.

⁵ Isaiah 14:1-2. ⁶ Isaiah 14:7-8. ⁷ Isaiah 13:17-22.

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history. It is a commonplace to say that there runs through the Bible a rhetorical use of the word Babylon for the whole system of evil in the world. It begins with the God-ignoring ambitious building of a great tower at Babel, and continues consistently to the end of John's Revelation. It will be noted that while the ancient city of Babylon has lain in ruins for centuries the language used here is not fully fulfilled in conditions on the old Babylon site to-day. The words fit into a past destruction and point to something more that hasn't yet happened.

Here then is *a crisis of judgment for the Jew, turned into a crisis of judgment for the world system*, followed by a restored Jew nation at the head of the nations, and a consequent happy new order of things on the earth.

This seems clearly to be the *first* meaning here; the meaning *to the man talking* and then writing, and to those of his own generation listening and reading. And quite as clearly such a group of events has never yet worked out.

There follows now a series of messages to the nations surrounding these Jew nations, Philistia on the immediate coast,¹ Moab to the southeast,² Damascus to the north,³ some African country beyond Ethiopia in the far south,⁴ Egypt the nearer south,⁵ Babylon ("the wilderness of the sea") in the far east,⁶ Dumah or Edom in the

¹ Isaiah 14 : 28-33.

³ Isaiah 17.

⁵ Isaiah 19-20.

² Isaiah 15 and 16.

⁴ Isaiah 18.

⁶ Isaiah 21 : 1-10.

southeast,¹ Arabia to the far southeast,² then to the home people ("the valley of vision"),³ then Tyre on the far northern coast.⁴ The one constant strain in all of these messages is that God is going to act in judgment righting the wrongs. In the message to Egypt there is promise of utterly changed blessed conditions for Egypt and for Assyria *after* the judgment.

Then there is a broad summing up of the case for the whole world. These nations seem to be meant to stand for *all* the nations. This summing up makes a most remarkable climax. It runs through chapters twenty-four to twenty-seven.

The whole earth is to be judged.⁵ It is because the laws have been broken, the very laws of nature. Yet it is not a final judgment, nor a judgment of all the race.⁶ There is a spared population. These would be radically changed in spirit by the experience they have gone through. The earth would ring with their joyous songs.

In the judgment there is a terrific series of earthquakes.⁷ The judgment includes the evil leaders in the unseen spirit world, as well as kings on the earth. These are to be interned for a later punishment. Then follows a glorious reign of God on the earth *through the restored Jew nation*.

Then follows a jubilant song of praise over the

¹ Isaiah 21 : 11. ² Isaiah 21 : 13-17. ³ Isaiah 22.

⁴ Isaiah 23. ⁵ Isaiah 24 : 1-6. ⁶ Isaiah 24 : 13-16.

⁷ Isaiah 24 : 18-23.

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wondrous new order of things on the earth.¹ In this certain items stand out. The Jew is to be the first nation of all the earth. His leadership will be to all the peoples of the earth as a feast of good things to eat. There will be a new openness of mind and heart toward God and His truth among all men. Prejudice and ignorance and hatred of God will disappear. It is as though a veil is now over their minds, and this will be taken away. There will be a universal cessation of death and of sorrow, and of the antagonistic feeling toward the Jew.

There is to be in connection with this new order a *partial resurrection* of those who have died, that is a resurrection of those in touch with God. “*Thy* dead shall live: my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust (of the graves); for the dew of God is a life-giving dew, giving life to that which has lost life, and the earth shall cast forth the dead.”

There is the intimation that some would be spared God’s visitation of judgment. And the whole group of events is characterized as God acting in judgment to right the wrongs of earth. And it is directly said that He will at this time act in judgment against Satan, the great evil spirit leader.² And then there is to be a gathering of Jews from everywhere to Palestine.³

The group of messages running through chapters twenty-eight to thirty-five close up the prophetic part of the first section of Isaiah.

¹ Isaiah 25-27. ² Isaiah 27 : 1. ³ Isaiah 27 : 12-13.

It follows the same general strain with some details added.

Jerusalem "the lion of God" is to suffer a terrible siege by a multitude of all the nations. The deliverance is through God's direct interposition, turning the judgment on the Jew into a judgment on these nations. It is accompanied by a great storm of thunder and lightning with earthquake, and the nations assembled against her are blown away like small dust before the wind. The deliverance comes "in an instant suddenly."¹ The striking thing to note is that this is directly connected with a complete restoration of the Jew nation, wholly changed in spirit, and this comes quickly after the crisis of judgment.²

In the new order of things coming there is to be a notable change in nature. There would be an increase in the light of the sun and moon, exerting a wholesome, healing influence on the earth, in the day when the Jew-nation's wounds are being healed up. This is connected with a judgment on the nations, and by simple inference following it. It will be a terrific crisis of judgment, through supernatural interposition, and be accompanied by a tremendous storm.³

There's a peculiarly tender touch of God's love in the way He will protect the Jew during the awful crisis coming. He will be to the nation and their capital city as a mother-bird hovering over her young to protect them. So He will

¹ Isaiah 29 : 1-8.

² Isaiah 29 : 17-24.

³ Isaiah 30 : 23-33.

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protect and deliver and preserve. The enemy would be defeated by supernatural interposition, and would find his attempt against the Jew turning into a terrible fire for himself.¹

Then Isaiah swings again to the blessed new order of things coming for his people.² It will be through a notable king coming. His very presence would be a protection. There would be a change in the character of the people, both moral and mental. Men would be keener mentally, with truer insight into character, and controlled by high moral standards.

All this would come through the Holy Spirit being poured out upon them.³ Justice and righteousness and peaceful content would be the blessed commonplace. But before all this there would be a terrible crisis of judgment.⁴ And then an exquisite practical word is put in regarding one's personal attitude toward all this: meanwhile blessed are ye that go patiently, strongly on in the commonplace daily round, amid all sorts of circumstances, steadily believing in the victorious blessed outcome which God has promised.⁵

There is the vivid abruptness of the spoken word to an intense responsive crowd in this next bit.⁶ Isaiah is denouncing the enemy of his people, then he looks up and breathes out a prayer for help. Then suddenly he sees the city surrounded by the enemies as he has so often told. Then

¹ Isaiah 31 : 4-9.

² Isaiah 32.

³ Isaiah 32 : 15.

⁴ Isaiah 32 : 19.

⁵ Isaiah 32 : 20.

⁶ Isaiah 33.

with dramatic suddenness God reveals His power interposing; there's a great tumult of confused terror among the crowds surrounding the city, then the peoples flee in precipitate confusion, and the Jew takes possession of the vast stores left behind.¹ And then Isaiah's eye is flooded with the wonderful changes, natural and spiritual, surely coming in the blessed restoration.

The crisis of judgment on the nations absorbs his speech as he brings his record of messages to a close. It is to be on all the nations. It is a judgment of indignation against the wrongs of earth. It comes up to a terrific heading or crisis, with terrible earthquakes, and a break-up in the rhythm of the skies.

It is connected directly with the land of Edom as the immediate center of action. It is spoken of as a day of *vengeance*, that is, not revenge, but a making right of what has been wrong. And this is in behalf of the Jews. It should be keenly noted that it is not a general final judgment, for it is followed by the new Jewish order.

This new order of things is the subject of the exquisite prose poem with which he closes.² Diseased human conditions are all quite gone. The earth is changed back to a Garden of Eden again. Beasts of prey no longer disturb. There is a glad confidence in human hearts in place of withering fear. There is a wholly new moral nature in men. And with great bursts of joyous singing they make the city of Jerusalem to ring.

¹ Isaiah 32 : 1-4.

² Isaiah 35.

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This is one of the bits in Isaiah that the Christian heart has loved and glowed over in every land throughout the generations. But it has a depth and intensity of meaning to the Jew talking and writing and the Jew listening and reading which no non-Jew can take in until it becomes a reality to our eyes with theirs.

Now the intensely significant thing for us non-Jews to note is that these things are all grouped together in Isaiah's thought and passion. There's a terrific crisis coming, and through it the new wondrous order coming to the earth with the Jew in the center. Of course, no such grouping of events has ever occurred.

Micah is the fourth of this quartette of prophet-preachers whose time of activity runs together. He comes in toward the close of the period when these four men were God's spokesmen to the nation. His written message is brief. He begins abruptly with a crisis of judgment coming to all the earth. It is by direct action of God. It is accompanied by earthquake, though that word is not used.¹

Then he goes on to connect this with the sins of his own people. And continues in this strain. Then he comes to the favourite subject with all these Jewish preachers. There's a new order of things coming to the earth. It will be in "the latter days."² The Jew is to be at the head of all the nations of the earth. The other nations come voluntarily to his leadership.

¹ Micah 1:2-4.

² Micah 4.

He is to be peculiarly a teacher-nation, teaching about God, who Himself is King over them. He is to be the arbiter in all disputes among the nations. In that He will be the spokesman of God. It is to be a non-military leadership. The poorest man of the smallest nation would be free to sit by his own fireside with enough fuel in the grate, enough food in the kitchen, with his child cuddling at his knee and no breath of withering fear knocking at the door.¹

But all this comes after and through a crisis coming.² This comes distinctly after the return from the Babylon captivity. This time it is a gathering not of one but of "*many nations*" against the Jew. But by God's overruling providence and interposition the situation is exactly reversed, and the occasion is turned into a defeat of these nations by the Jew.

The future glory of the restored Jew would be through the coming of a notable king.³ He would come of human stock. His birthplace is Bethlehem. Not the Bethlehem up north in Zebulun but the one down in Judah near to Jerusalem whose older name was Ephrathah. Yet he is to be of divine stock too, "his goings forth from everlasting." His coming puts an end to a period of judgment during which they have been "given up" to their enemies.

His reign is over the Jew, and yet it would also be "unto the ends of the earth." Under His

¹ Micah 4 : 1-8.

² Micah 4 : 9-5 : 1.

³ Micah 5 : 2-15.

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reign the Jew would be a blessing to the nations, "as dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass," and be the leader among the nations. It would be strictly a non-military leadership, and the Jew a spiritually changed people. And the beginning of all this is to be through a crisis of judgment "upon the nations."

At the close the same threads are gathered up and knotted.¹ When God's "indignation" against Israel's sin has spent itself He would "execute judgment" against their enemies. Israel would be in the lead among the nations.

It would be just such a time as when they came out of Egypt and the hosts of Pharaoh were utterly destroyed, but much more. For now the nations are to come humbly and reverently to God and to Jewish leadership ashamed of their past conduct. This would be through some outstanding revelation of the power of God utterly subduing the pride of the nations.

There follows these messages a smaller group of three prophetic writers. Habakkuk, Zephaniah and Joel speak their messages a little later as things are heading up toward the climax of the exile.

Habakkuk, though so brief, is of intense interest because it is a discussion of the whole problem of evil. He is troubled over evil, unpunished, running riot among the leaders of his people.² God answers his cry with assurance that Israel is to be punished through the As-

¹ Micah 7 : 9-17.

² Habakkuk 1 : 1-4.

syrian.¹ But Habakkuk is still troubled because Assyria is so evil. It would still be evil in the lead. He looks for a further answer.² And it comes.³ The Assyrian is to be judged. Then the view broadens out to the time when God would be in action to righten the wrongs in "all the earth."

And there comes to the troubled man on his knees a vision of God acting in judgment.⁴ It should be noted that the action words throughout are *future* rather than *past*, as in our common versions, *i. e.*, "God *cometh* from Teman," His glory *covereth* the heavens, and so on through verse 15. It is so indicated in the margin of both English and American revisions. Habakkuk sees it all as something distinctly future.

The judgment is upon the nations;⁵ it is accompanied by earthquake and storm⁶ and heavenly disturbances.⁷ The scene of action is in the land of Palestine,⁸ implying a gathering of the armies of the nations there. It is connected with Edom as the place from which God comes in judgment.⁹ The chief of the enemy forces is wounded to death.¹⁰ The immediate objective is not a final judgment on the race, but is on behalf of the Jew. It is a vindication of the wrongs

¹ Habakkuk 1 : 5-11.

² Habakkuk 1 : 12-2 : 1.

³ Habakkuk 2 : 2-20.

⁴ Habakkuk 3 : 1-15.

⁵ Habakkuk 3 : 11-12.

⁶ Verse 10.

⁷ Verse 11.

⁸ Verse 12.

⁹ Verse 3.

¹⁰ Verses 13, 14.

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against him.¹ The result is a restoration of the Jew nation.²

Zephaniah's brief message rings the same changes. The nations and kingdoms will be assembled together, and then God will pour out His indignation upon them.³ The movement is to be earth-wide. But it is not a final judgment on the common crowd of the race, for it is followed by a changed order on the earth. In this the peoples are said to be turned again to a pure or unmixed tongue or language. It calls to mind the confusion or mixture of tongues away back at Babel, and one wonders just what it means. The Jew is not only restored to God's favour, but becomes the famous nation of the earth, praised by all the peoples. There is a reverential worship of God by men of all the earth.⁴

Joel's intense message ties a tight knot on the end of this group of preëxilic prophecies. As he writes Judah is still in Jerusalem, and the temple standing, but they are a vassal nation paying heavy tribute, and their northern kinsmen nation has quite gone, a disgraced captive in the Euphrates valley.

Events are put in here in reverse order, the thing the Jew longs for put first, then the process by which it comes. The chief space and emphasis are on the tremendous crisis through which things work out. There is to be a time of wondrous spiritual blessing in the world. It will be

¹ Verses 9 and 13.

² Verse 13.

³ *Zephaniah* 3 : 8-20.

⁴ *Zephaniah* 2 : 11.

through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on *all flesh*.¹

This is the passage Peter quotes on Pentecost. But clearly this is more than Pentecost saw. That was only a beginning: this is to be the full, the real thing. Then the spirit was indeed poured out on all *classes* of men. But this speaks of His being poured out actually upon all the race. The Jew would be given the place of leadership in this new movement. It is their young and old people who are the seers and prophets.

In connection with this there are to be startling, miraculous happenings in both the heavens and the earth, terrible to those experiencing them.² The sun fails to shine. The moon is as blood. The stars cease shining, earthquakes and heaven-quakes occur together. In the midst of this Jerusalem would be the center of safety for those who would shelter there.

All nations are to be gathered together at Jerusalem. There is to be an execution of judgment upon them in the long, deep valley of Jehoshaphat lying to the east of Jerusalem. The Jew listening would be quick to note the play on the name Jehoshaphat, the valley "of God's judgment," which runs through the third chapter. "The valley of decision" is the valley of God's decision, or judgment. The judgment is in vindication of the Jew, righting the wrongs done him. It will be by means of a direct

¹ Joel 2 : 28-29.

² Joel 3 : 1-16.

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supernatural interposition of God's own presence and power.

Then comes the new nation of the Jews, a purified, chastened, holy people, dwelling in a land of renewed fertility. And God Himself dwells in their midst at Jerusalem. Here then is the same connected grouping put very intensely. A crisis of judgment upon the Jew, at the hand of the nations, is turned into a terrific crisis of judgment upon the organized nations. Then follows a restored Jew, radically changed in character, and a changed world, with the Holy Spirit poured out upon all men. It is a new wondrous order of things with the Jew nation in the lead.

The Messages of the Night.

Then there come the later messages as the long night settles down dark and gloomy over the Jewish nation. There are six books in this group, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Obadiah and Nahum. Lamentations is the bitter sob over the desolate Jerusalem. Obadiah is a message to Edom, and Nahum to Nineveh.

Jeremiah has a permanent place in literature as having one outstanding characteristic. His name has given a word in our dictionaries, jeremiad, an utterance of great grief, but used critically, as though the thing were overdone, or as giving a certain satisfaction to the one expressing it.

Yet there could be no more unjust impression. Jeremiah's was not an oversensitive nature mor-

bidly sobbing over the plight of his people. He had rare political sagacity, keen discernment into national conditions and the inevitable outcome. He was utterly alone in this. Yet the after results proved him right, he was the one man who sensed things right.

He had the rare courage to tell what he clearly saw, and to urge the proper national policy, even though it brought him bitterest reproach, broken friendships and bodily persecution. His sobbing is that of a giant of strength and love over a situation which he had suffered everything except actual death to prevent. He lived to see the heart-breaking circumstances which he and he alone had foreseen come sadly true.

He is absorbed chiefly, almost wholly, with the immediate, intense situation of the nation as it resists the enemy, and then is overcome and carried away. Yet from the first there are strains of a distant future. He lifts his eyes at times from the boiling political pot of his own day to see gleams of national light ahead, far ahead.

In the very beginning he sees "all the families of the kingdom of the earth" laying siege to Jerusalem.¹ This suggests a much broader movement than what actually happened in his own lifetime when the nation's exile began. But, as he is using this as a plea for national reform, almost in the same breath he speaks of a wondrous future.

All nations, in a new spirit of devotion to God,

¹Jeremiah 1:15.

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would assemble at Jerusalem as a new world-center, for reverent worship, and would call that city the throne of God. At that time there would be a reunited Jewish nation in the old Palestine homeland, and filling the place of spiritual leadership among the nations.¹

In the same message he sees a time of judgment coming to *the whole earth*, with the heavens black, and earthquakes disturbing the mountains and hills. But it is distinctly said to be not a final judgment, but a crisis, looking forward to something else following.²

And again in the same connection he insists that the judgment coming to the *Jew* is not a final reckoning, but by inference to be followed by something radically different.³ All this is at the beginning of his ministry.

Then some twenty-three years later when the nation had become a sadly humiliated vassal to Egypt he swings again to the same theme. He has specified the period of exile as seventy years. Then he looks beyond this to something else, something much more sweeping. It is to be a visitation of judgment on all the nations of the earth.

One by one they are named, then it is made clear that "*all the kingdoms of the world*" are meant. And then the king of Sheshach or Babylon is put at the climax. It is distinctly coupled with a visitation of judgment on the Jew. It is

¹Jeremiah 3: 17-18.

²Jeremiah 4: 23-28.

³Jeremiah 5:18.

a settlement of a controversy between God and the nations. It is to be the righting of a long score of wrongs.¹

Seven years later comes another distinctive bit of this sort.² Babylon had displaced Egypt as the conqueror of Israel, and two kings had been added to the exile colony in the Euphrates. This time it's a message of promise coupled with a yet more disastrous judgment. They are not only to return to the land of their fathers, but to "possess" it, that is, be an independent sovereign state.

Yet there is something coming before that, something unspeakably worse than anything experienced yet. The words point to a specific time and experience, a *crisis* of judgment rather than a long period of judgment. The crisis is coupled with a deliverance following. The yoke of bondage is to be broken, the scattered Jews are to be gathered from afar, and the Jewish nation restored under the royal house of David, with peace and prosperity and no sense of fear.

And the deliverance in turn is coupled with a decisive crisis of judgment on all the nations whither the Jews have been scattered. This is said to be something that God has set His heart on doing, and it is to happen "in the latter days."

Then follows what would be to a devout Jew a picture of the new order of things after this

¹Jeremiah 25: 15-31.

²Jeremiah 30: 3-11, 20-24.

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double crisis of vindication.¹ The Jews are to be a thoroughly harmonious reunited nation in the land of Palestine. But it is to be a wholly changed, repentant, purified people with a passionate devotion for God and His will. The city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt on the most extensive scale. It is to be a time of greatest joy.

And one's Gentile ear is caught by this, that the Jew is to become the *protector* of the other nations. This is put in a simple, graphic way, very appealing to those who were experiencing the sore sorrows of the utterly broken captive nation. God would create *a new thing in the earth*; "a woman shall encompass (or compass) a man."

The word encompass is the same as in the Song of Moses² where he speaks of God finding Israel in a desert in sore need, and "He *compassed* him about, he cared for him." The word underneath means to compass, or put one's arms about, in a loving, protective sense.³

Here it means that the renewed Jew nation, then weak physically as a woman characteristically is in comparison with a man, would become the strong nation, so acknowledged, protecting the other nations even as a man protects a woman. There could be no more striking statement of the new position of strong leadership among the nations of the earth than this which it conceives the Jew as having.

¹Jeremiah 31.

²Deuteronomy 32:10.

³See Gesenius' Lexicon.

And the startling character of all this sort of thing, its utter unbelievableness as things looked, is recognized in the brief paragraph where God solemnly reminds them of His creative power. It would take nothing less than such power as His to do such a thing as this.

Ten years later yet there comes another striking passage.¹ It is accompanied by a bit of intense realistic action. Jeremiah, at God's bidding, buys a bit of land in Palestine, and pays out the money, and has the deed carefully recorded. It would be about as unshrewd a thing as one could do. The city was even then being besieged. Real estate was worthless. The thing was utterly non-Jewish commercially, sheer waste of good money, as things looked. But the leading is so clear that Jeremiah pays out his carefully counted money, assuredly reckoning that nothing is too hard for God.

Money talked that time if ever. It recited the creed,—faith in God, when the storm hung blackest. To his fellow countrymen there could be no intenser way of emphasizing the thing Jeremiah was insisting on. It was this: the Jewish nation was to be restored as a free sovereign state. The people would be gathered out from all the countries where they were scattered. They would be a radically changed people.

The capital city would become famous in the earth. The new Jewish nation would be recognized by all the nations, and recognized as a

¹Jeremiah 32 and 33.

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signal evidence of God's power and faithfulness. The restoration would include the revival of the royal house of David. That is, there would be a king reigning of the Davidic lineage. And again the unlikeliness of this happening is recognized in the supernatural power of God required, even the same as preserves the rhythm of day and night, of the sun's swing in the heavens.

The book closes with a series of messages of denunciation about the nations surrounding Palestine. This series comes to a climax in a message to Babylon.¹ This might easily be supposed to refer wholly and only to the destruction of the Babylon of long ago, but for certain distinct features and a certain grouping of events.

There seems to be a sliding from nearer to farther events here in speaking of Babylon, and a movement from the city empire to the world system of evil. At the first the destruction of Babylon is by a group of nations, and can easily be identified with the past history of the city and empire.

But later Babylon is associated *with* "the nations" and "kingdoms," implying that all of them are intended, and is spoken of as the dominating leader of the nations that "made all the earth tremble: the nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."² Indeed this grouping of the nations of the earth is designated as Babylon. It is one of the numerous suggestions in the prophetic pages that the name Babylon is used for the whole organized world

¹Jeremiah 50 and 51.

²Jeremiah 51: 7.

system of evil. The destruction of Babylon the system is sweeping, decisive, final.

At the same time with this there is a restoration of the Jew nation. They come to Palestine in a deeply penitent mood, such as has never marked the Jewish people since their captivity. It is a reunited harmonious Jewry. It is a spiritually regenerated people, wholly and radically changed in attitude toward God. Four times this judgment upon Babylon in connection with the restoration of the Jew is spoken of as "the vengeance of the Lord," "the vengeance of His temple," that is, the righting of wrong.¹

It is yet more striking that the Jew nation is *the means used in the destruction of Babylon*. This is explicitly stated in a remarkable passage.² The power of God is spoken of in contrast with the idols, and then it says "the portion (or share or allotment) of Israel (*i. e.*, God) is not like these (idols). For He is the maker of all things (named above)." . . . Then God says to Israel "thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war.

"*With thee* will I break in pieces *the nations*; and *with thee* will I destroy kingdoms; and *with thee* will I break in pieces the horse and his rider," and so on, the "with thee" being used nine times in a way peculiarly impressive and emphatic.

While Jeremiah is the prophet of the break-up

¹Jeremiah 50:15, 28; 51:6, 11.

²Jeremiah 51:15-26.

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time in the homeland, *Ezekiel* is God's messenger to the people in exile. His active ministry runs through some twenty-two years. His messages are a blend of denunciation and pleading. He had to resort to personally heroic measures to get a hearing. It suggests how utterly hardened the people were, how unchanged in spirit by their experiences.

Near the beginning of his activity this stands out: there is to be a crisis in which God would be acting on their behalf. It is a double crisis, of "wrath poured out" on their behalf, that is against their enemies, and of judgment upon themselves.¹ As the direct result of this they would be restored to their homeland, a wholly renewed people, utterly changed in spirit, acceptable as a sweet savour to God, who Himself would be King over them.

Some five years later word came to the exiled colony that the final siege of Jerusalem had come, and the city fallen. A special message is given Ezekiel, in which this occurs,²—the exiled nation is to be restored. The restoration is to be under the old David dynasty. But it is to be a radically changed nation, made over new inside. God Himself will dwell in their midst, indicating that they are pleasing to Him. They would be a sovereign state again, wholly free from their enemies, with peace and contentment, and the land enjoying renewed fertility. Not only would

¹ Ezekiel 20: 33-38, 40-44.

² Ezekiel 33: 23-31.

their reproach be gone, but they would be renowned, famous among the nations.

A little later all this is repeated, with many variations, and this additional bit; their restoration would be recognized by all nations as God's own direct action in supernatural power. And as a direct result there would be a changed attitude toward God among the nations.¹

Then there comes the dramatic vision or parable of the dry bones.² There is a broad valley full of dry bones, many bones and very dry. Then the bones come together fitting naturally, and are covered with flesh, but there is no life. Then the breath comes in and they are a great living company of people. So it is indicated that the nation is to be made over wholly new by the direct breath of God. This would be a world event, so recognized by all the nations.

There is, too, the possible hint or foreshadowing here that the scattered denationalized Jews would some day be renationalized *before* the spiritual change came through the direct touch of God. It is as though through God's overruling providence, but by their own effort without repentance toward God, they would again become a nation before their restoration by God's intervention.

Then there is a remarkable group of paragraphs regarding events that are clearly future *if* taken at their first meaning.³ It points to a

¹ Ezekiel 36:21-36.

² Ezekiel 37.

³ Ezekiel 38 and 39.

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tremendous time of crisis in Palestine for the Jew first, and then for their enemies at the time, a double crisis. It is followed by the Jew, utterly changed in character, being established as a nation in Palestine. And the whole thing becomes famous among the nations of the earth as God's direct supernatural interposition on behalf of the Jew.

Look a bit closer at this. There's an armed invasion of Palestine. It is at a time when the Jew nation is in possession there, and in quiet security not suspecting nor fearing any danger. The attack is by a group of nations from the uttermost parts of the north. The names given are easily recognized as of the land now known as Russia. This nation or group of nations are joined in their attack by others, "even many peoples." Persia and Ethiopia are among those specified. They are an immense horde. They come "as a cloud," so many of them. It is clearly a terrific overwhelming movement.

Then the second phase comes. The attack is repelled by what is clearly supernatural action. There is a tremendous earthquake, with a terrific storm of rain and hail and lightning. Discord breaks out in the ranks of the attacking force, and they take to fighting each other. The whole thing ends in a terrible defeat and utter rout of the enemies of the Jew.

Then the Jew is established securely in his own land, but it is a new Jew nation, utterly changed in spirit, wholly devoted in heart to God. And

the whole movement is common talk among the peoples of the earth. It will be seen that God has been acting directly in the affairs of earth in a startling supernatural manner, and has been righting the wrongs done His people. By inference there is a new order of things on the earth. The Jew is in the place of chief prominence. But the peoples everywhere acknowledge the power and presence of God in a way commonly unknown before.

The last section of the book¹ is a highly idealized description of the Jew nation settled again in Palestine, of the city of Jerusalem, and of the temple, as the dwelling place of God Himself. It is similar in kind to what has already been found, but immensely greater in degree, idealized in every way to the highest point.

Daniel was taken with the captives to Babylon while still a youth. He remained there at least into the third year of Cyrus, a period of eighty-one years. If he had been only twelve at the beginning he must have lived to a very ripe old age. It was in his matured old age that most of the messages came with which we are concerned.

His book falls into two parts; certain outstanding incidents of his career make up the first six chapters, and then four remarkable visions dealing with the future of his people and of the whole world make up the second six chapters.

It was early in his career and the turning-

¹ Ezekiel 40-48.

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point in his public career, that he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's forgotten dreams of the great image. And this proves to be intimately allied with the great visions of his later years, and indeed to be a background for them, a distinct foreshadowing of the broad outlines of the detailed four visions which make up the latter half of the book.

The dream and its interpretation ¹ give a broad sweep of history from the reign of the Babylon autocrat of that day on to a time in the future when there would be a wholly new, different sort of kingdom on the earth, set up by supernatural intervention, and to be world-wide. Through that long stretch of time there were to be four great successive world-kingdoms, or phases of world-empire, each with certain marked characteristics.

Then there would come a sharp crisis. It would come through supernatural action. "A stone cut out without hands" smites the image. There would be established by God Himself a kingdom completely overthrowing these preceding kingdoms, taking their place and having an authoritative rule in the whole earth.

Here is the repetition of the outline with which we have become familiar, namely, a new order of things on the earth, preceded or ushered in by what is evidently a terrific crisis. And in this crisis the preceding world system of government is swept away. This image fits so ex-

¹ Daniel 2.

actly into the succession of Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman kingdoms that it has been universally so accepted by scholars, some rationalistic critics thinking this so plain that they claim it was written long after the successive kingdoms had passed into history.

Now a look at *the first vision* of the four.¹ In this vision Daniel sees four beasts come up on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, one after the other. The last beast has ten horns, then develops an eleventh, which displaces three of the original ten and dominates the remaining seven. This last horn has "eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things."

Then there comes a sharp crisis. A new sort of throne appears, clearly not of man but of God. It casts down these men's thrones. The beast, with the dominating eleventh horn, is slain. And then there is a new sort of world government or dominion, reigned over by one called "a Son of Man."

The interpretation very simply says that there would be four kings or kingdoms in the earth, and that they would be displaced by a kingdom of "the saints of the Most High," which to Daniel meant only one thing, the Jews. Then follows detailed information about the fourth kingdom, and its ruler, which are displaced by the wholly new order, the Jew kingdom. It will be noted how the broad outline fits into the dream of the great image in chapter two, namely,

¹ Daniel 7.

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four successive kingdoms, a crisis, and then a wholly new sort of kingdom ruling the world.

The *characteristics* of the fourth kingdom, which produces this outstanding king, are of intense interest. It is *aggressive* to a terrific extent. It breaks down and devours and destroys ruthlessly. This is its chief trait. At the close it develops into a ten-kingdomed state or confederacy. And then under the influence of its last ruler, it becomes an eight-kingdomed coalition.

The chief attention centers on this last king. *His personality* is most striking. He has unusual eyes. His "look" or appearance is aggressive, dominating or domineering to an extreme. But the most striking feature is his speech. It is bold and blasphemous, startlingly so. It is this that becomes the immediate cause of his downfall. He is proud, defiant, aggressive, self-assertive, especially against God and against the Jews. He plans to make radical changes in "the times and the law," referring apparently to some upsetting rearrangement of the common adjustments of the calendar and the seasons.

His career is as striking as his person. He begins in a small way, increasing gradually in power until he becomes the absolute autocrat of this fourth kingdom. He forges to the front *after* the kingdom has taken the shape of a ten-kingdomed confederacy. It is under his rule that this fourth kingdom develops its dreadful characteristics of devouring and smashing down

all opposition. He makes war on the Jew, who seems the special object of his malignant hatred, and who suffers sorely under his cruel tyranny. But there is a distinct limit set to his career. It continues "time, times and half a time."

Then comes *the sharp crisis in his career*. He is killed by some supernatural intervention. And his kingdom goes to pieces. In its place comes a new kingdom, a new sort of kingdom. It is world-wide, including all peoples and languages. It is said to be the kingdom of the Jew, that is, "of the peoples of the saints of the Most High." Yet it is also spoken of as the kingdom of one who "comes with the clouds," "like unto a Son of Man."

It will be noticed that the natural inference would be that these four kingdoms would cover the whole range of history from the kingdom then ruling until the new different sort of God-kingdom was set up. And this inference is strengthened by the teaching of the great image in chapter two. The two run parallel in this.

The *second vision*¹ comes about two years later, or possibly a little less. In this Daniel sees a two-horned ram pushing irresistibly toward the west, the north, and the south. It is slain by the fierce onset of a he-goat with a notable horn which runs a brief, aggressive, dominant career. Then the notable horn is broken, four horns take its place. And then a little horn comes up which becomes very great and makes special and

¹ Daniel 8.

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successful attack upon the Jews and their temple and its sacrificial worship.

The *interpretation* says plainly that the ram represents the Medo-Persian kingdom, and the he-goat, Greece. It will be noted that this vision fits into the same general outline as the first. There is a vindication of the Jew, indicated by the cleansing or justifying of his temple in Jerusalem. It is preceded by a terrific crisis for the Jew which centers at Jerusalem and in the temple. The chief points of contact between the first and second vision is this *crisis* immediately preceding a new Jewish order, *and* particularly the *personality* and *career* of the notable king who is the leader against the Jew in this crisis.

The *personality* of this king is most striking. He has an unusual face, "of fierce countenance." The word underneath means harsh, stern. He is hard of face, impudent, shameless, merciless, not influenced by human amenities. All this is included in the language used. He has understanding of "dark sentences." That is, he is *studiously skilled* in entangled intricate sentences, tricky, crafty, double-meaninged sentences. He is assertive to an outstanding degree, blasphemously assertive, magnifying himself "even to the prince of the host" (of heaven).

There is a strange uncanny phase that makes one rub his eyes to see if he is seeing straight. It is the distinct suggestion, not only that he is in alliance with Satan, but that he himself is not

merely human, but a blend of an evil spirit and a human being. For his activity extends to the spirits of the unseen upper spirit-world. He became "great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host (of heaven) he cast down to the ground and trampled upon them." It is plainly said twice that his might is "not by his own power." His is a strange personality.

Note *his career*. He begins as king of Greece, in a small way. He becomes exceeding great in three directions, presumably from Greece, toward the south and the east and Palestine, "the glorious land." Then it tells of his strange activity in the upper spirit world. He is blasphemously, defiantly assertive even to the prince of the host (of heaven), that is against God Himself. He makes special attack against the Jew, striking at the thing dearest to the Jewish heart, the sacrifices of the temple. For he takes away the "continual," that is, the daily sacrifices.

This implies that at the time of his activity the Jew is organized as a nation, there is a Jewish temple or place of worship, and the old Jewish system of daily sacrifices is in force again. It is striking to note that it is because of "transgression" (that is by men, the Jews) that he is able to accomplish his purpose in taking away the daily sacrifice.

He "cast down truth to the ground," so revealing the very genius of the Satan spirit. That is, he makes deceit and lying a cursed com-

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monplace. "And he did and prospered." That is, he has power to run riot in his career, driving through his purposes and plans without successful hindrance. He comes to his end supernaturally, not by human or ordinary means. He is "broken *without hand*." It is the same phrase as is used of the stone that destroys the great world kingdom, in chapter two.

The length of time of his desecration of the temple is specified as twenty-three hundred "*evenings and mornings*." The statement is striking, exceptional. There is the distinct touch of what would humanly be called genius in this statement in order to make the exact meaning clear. The word year is not a fixed term. The length of time the word indicates has varied much in the past. The word day has many and varying meanings. But "*evenings and mornings*" could mean only so many actual days.

There is here the distinct intimation of a restoration of the Jewish kingdom. For the sanctuary or temple is cleansed or justified. The temple stood and stands for the very heart of Jewish ideals and life. A temple vindicated after being insultingly desecrated would carry with it the whole idea of the Jewish kingdom restored. All this is said to happen in the latter time of the world kingdom "when the transgressors are come to the full." The extreme fullness of the cup makes it spill out.

It seems beyond question that this strange

notorious king in both of these visions is the same. In the second vision he comes out of the kingdom of Greece. In the first vision he comes to the head of the ten-kingdomed confederacy which succeeds to the world sovereignty after the Greek sway.

It is of interest to recall the run of Greece history here. After the death of Alexander the Great, the outstanding king of Greek history, his kingdom was divided among four of his generals. For centuries Greece was non-existent as a sovereign state. It came under Roman rule, and then Venetian. It was simply a province of the Turkish empire for some centuries. But in 1832 it was put again on the map as an independent kingdom, and so remains. This is of intense interest to the student of God's prophetic word.

The *third vision*¹ proves to be simply further information about the second. Gabriel explains that he has come to make Daniel understand the vision yet more clearly. It gives the point in Jewish history where this terrific crisis comes, and gives also the Jewish situation at the time.

Daniel is praying because he has figured out that the seventy years of their national captivity, as foretold by Jeremiah, are about closing. This is the point of contact with Gabriel's explanation. Gabriel says that "seventy weeks are decreed" *et cetera*. The word weeks has, underneath, the Hebrew word for "sevens." Tracing

¹ Daniel 9, especially verses 21 to the end.

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its use throughout the Bible it is used sometimes for a seven of *days* and sometimes for a seven of *years*, depending on the sense of the passage. Here it seems clearly to mean the latter. Daniel is thinking of *seventy years*, he tells us. Gabriel says there is to be a future period of seventy *sevens* of years into which the vision fits.

There was to be a period of seventy sevens of years of Jewish history before the new order of things, the blessed restoration of the Jew kingdom. This is broken up into three parts, seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and then a final seven. At the close of this whole period the wondrous climax of blessing is reached. Sin would have been judged, a new order of righteousness introduced, all the prophecies fulfilled, and, chief of all, the most Holy One anointed as King.

Now this seventy-sevens period is adjusted to the time when the blasphemous Jew-hating king would be in action. Sixty-nine sevens would run by. Then "the Anointed One" is "cut off." Then the blasphemous king appears, makes a firm or strong covenant or treaty with many (Jews) for one seven. In the middle of this period he abruptly breaks the treaty, stops the daily sacrifices, and takes some extreme step in the temple which is regarded as the very climax of blasphemy. And later both the temple and the city of Jerusalem are destroyed.

Now the cutting off of the Anointed One is easily recognized as the crucifixion of Jesus. This becomes a clear point of contact with actual

history. The period of sixty-nine sevens comes to a close then, according to Gabriel's explanation, leaving a period of seven years yet in the future. Clearly at the time of this last seven years the Jews are *organized as a nation* in Palestine, making a treaty, with the temple standing and the sacrifices being offered.

Now the fact that this has not occurred yet since the death of Jesus pushes all this group of events distinctly into the future. It is of much interest to note that this makes *a gap* between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth seven. *A long gap* running now nearly nineteen full centuries.

And this gives clearly the Jewish situation when this terrible blasphemous king appears. The Jew is in his own land, he is nationalized, and making a treaty. The temple is standing, and the sacrifices being offered. This suggests that in these prophetic pages the chronology of the Jew naturally is reckoned only when he is organized as a nation.

It also makes clear that the vision takes account of historical events up to the crucifixion, then *ignores the long gap*, and again picks up the thread clear at the end when the Jew is again renationalized. And this seems to be the common rule in all these prophetic writings. Account is taken of world events *only when the Jew is a nation*.

It will be remembered that the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and of Daniel's first vision, commonly recognized as Babylonian,

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Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman, cover the whole swing of history from that time until the new sort of divine kingdom is set up. As the final break-up of the Jew nation, following the crucifixion, occurred in the time of the Roman kingdom, this would make this long gap, when the course of history is ignored or omitted, come in the time of the Roman kingdom. That is, from the point of view of these visions, the world power in control when the Jew renationalizes, is seen as the continuation of the Roman power.

And the vision closes with the assurance that this blasphemous desolator is finally and decisively judged and disposed of and so the dreadful crisis is over.

The fourth vision is the longest and the fullest of the series.¹ The broad outline is the same as the other three. There is to be a future full deliverance for the Jew from all his troubles. It is preceded by a terrific crisis, and this crisis centers in a blasphemous Jew-hating king. This fits the fourth vision into place as the last of a series covering the same events, and giving much additional information.

There are three parts to the vision: the introduction, chapter 10:1 to 11:1. The vision proper is in chapter 11:2 to 12:4 inclusive. And there are added bits of information of intense interest in chapter twelve, verse five to the end.

Almost a third of the whole space is given to

¹ Daniel 10-12.

a description of the interview between Daniel and his informant.¹ In the first vision an unnamed person talks with Daniel. In the second and third it is Gabriel who explains. This fourth is a step up. The one who explains here seems clearly divine. The resemblance with the description of the glorified Jesus in the first chapter of the Revelation of John is strikingly identical. It suggests the importance with which the whole matter treated here is held by God Himself.

The center of attention here is the personality and career of the blasphemous king of the other visions. As in the second vision he is connected at the beginning with the kingdom of Greece, and also appears as the king of the north, in a warfare between north and south, which rages at the east end of the Mediterranean, including Palestine, apparently as the roadway through. The treaty made by him with the Jew nation is mentioned six times, so making his identity quite clear.

There is a group of events,² with Palestine figuring prominently as the scene of action, before the seven year treaty is made with the Jew nation. It suggests that *probably* the Jew re-nationalization has been effected some time before the covenant is made.

In this group of events there is an alinement of warring forces, north and south, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, with success swinging

¹ Daniel 10: 1-11: 1.

² Daniel 11: 5-20.

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from one side to the other, but leaving the king of the north in a strong lead. In this conflict vast forces are involved. During this conflict some of the Jews take sides, thinking to carry out the prophesied future of their nation, but they fail.

The long gap of time alluded to, the Gentile gap, which the visions ignore because the Jew is not a nation seems to occur in this case between verses four and five of chapter eleven.

At chapter eleven, verse twenty-one, we come to the direct point of contact with Daniel's other visions, that is, the terrible end-time king comes on the scene here as *the king of the north*.

In the first vision he appears at the head of the fourth of the four great kingdoms. In the second he comes out of the kingdom of Greece. Here at the beginning he is connected with the kingdom of Greece, and then later appears as the king of the north in the conflict between north and south. In Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39, it is huge hordes from the Russian countries, in combination with other nationalities, that invade Palestine in the attack upon the Jew, in the same grouping of crisis and Jewish restoration.

It seems to indicate that this outstanding end-time king comes out of the kingdom of Greece, succeeds to the leadership of the eight-kingdomed confederacy; that this is chiefly a northern confederacy, the standpoint of the compass being the Mediterranean, and either includes the Russian countries, or has alliance with them.

It may help to note the style of recital here. There is first a general summary of the earlier part of the career of this king in chapter eleven, verse twenty-two. Then follows a detailed recital in order of events as they occur until this king meets his end. This runs through chapter eleven, verse twenty-three to the end of the chapter. Then there's a brief summary of the period as seen in the upper spirit world, identifying all this as the time of trouble foretold for the Jew, and giving closing events connected with his deliverance. This is chapter twelve, verses one to four.

Now a look at the *personality* of this king as given here. He is described as a contemptible person, one to be despised, possibly with reference to his lack of moral traits. He is self-willed, assertive, and blasphemously egotistical, magnifying himself above all gods, and utterly unscrupulous morally.

His career: he is not chosen originally as king, but seems to slip into that position by cunning flatteries, in a time of quiet and security. The chief events in his career, so far as noted here, are given in five successive stages. He makes a successful attempt to strengthen himself with the newly formed Jew nation by a league; then apparently by attack working one group against another by bribes and spoils of battle. In this way he practically gets control. Possibly this is simply preparatory to what follows, for he goes through Palestine (which is possibly a neutral or

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buffer state) on his way to attack the king of the south.¹

The attack is successful, and he returns through Palestine with great spoil and now his heart is against the covenant with the Jew, possibly as of no further use to him, and not to be allowed to hamper his purposes. Again the phrase occurs, "he shall *do*," seeming to indicate, as before, that he drives through his plans roughshod regardless of consequences to others.²

He makes a second attack against the south, this time unsuccessful, returns north through Palestine, and vents his disappointment and rage against the Jew, breaking the seven-year treaty, again driving through roughshod and strengthening the party among the Jews that sides with him against the treaty.

It is at this time that he stops the daily sacrifices, profanes the temple in the extreme manner spoken of as setting up "the abomination that maketh desolate," and begins a persecution of the Jews. It is a time of sore stress.³

Then he reaches the height of his career. His arrogant self-assertive blasphemy seems to reach its highest point at this time. Utterly lacking in moral scruples, he stops at nothing to strengthen himself and drive through his plans.⁴

Then at the last⁵ he meets an attack by the king of the south. He comes "like a whirlwind,"

¹ Daniel 11 : 23-24.

² Daniel 11 : 25-28.

³ Daniel 11 : 29-35.

⁴ Daniel 11 : 36-39.

⁵ Daniel 11 : 40-45.

with great military and naval forces, overrunning Palestine on his way south, and meeting with great though not complete success. Bad news turns him back toward the north "with great fury." And he pitches his tents at Jerusalem.¹ And at this point he comes to his end, the inference seems to be, suddenly.

Then comes a brief summary of this period as seen in the upper spirit world.² There are five items in the summary. Michael the great spirit prince, who is the special advocate in God's presence of the Jew, stands up on the Jew's behalf in the upper spirit realm, suggesting a spirit conflict there. On the earth it would be the most troublous time ever experienced since there was a nation. It is at this time that the deliverance and restoration of the Jew occurs.

There is to be a partial resurrection of the dead. Tregelles the famous English scholar gives this translation of verse two: "and many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; *these* (that awake) shall be unto everlasting life; but *those* (the rest of the sleepers) shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt." And those who have been true to God, and been teachers of His truth and insistent on His ideals, shall be leaders in the new order of things.

Then Daniel is told to seal up his writing as all this belongs to a time in the future, "the time

¹ "Between the seas at the glorious holy mountain."

² Daniel 12:1-4.

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of the end.” And he is further told the two common characteristics of the age preceding all this. There would be intense activity of movement on the earth, and great increase of human knowledge.

Now follows an added bit to the vision, a sort of sequel, giving further detailed information.¹ The length of time of the terrible crisis would be “for a time, times, and a half,”² that is, three and a half years.³ The utter breaking in pieces of the Jew so that he could no longer resist would be the end.

Again certain moral characteristics of the age preceding all this are given. There would be a moral intensifying, both bad and good toward the end. The pure would become purer. The wicked grow more wicked. The thoughtful, reverent student of God’s word would understand the significance of these events as they work out, but the common crowd would not understand.

Then there is a future period of time specified. There would run twelve hundred and ninety days from the time the daily sacrifice is taken away and the desecrating abomination set up in

¹ Daniel 12: 5 to the close.

² The phrase occurs twice in Daniel (7: 25; 12: 7) and in Revelation 12: 14. In this latter case it is used as an equivalent phrase for 1260 days used in verse 6 of that chapter.

³ Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon. “For a year, also two years, and half a year.”

the temple. Then there would be something of a blessed sort at the end of thirteen hundred and thirty-five days.

That is, the persecution of the Jew would run twelve hundred and sixty days, the equivalent of three and a half years. And then there would be a further seventy-five days *after* the persecution had stopped. And this is broken up into two parts, thirty days and then forty-five days more. And this would bring something very blessed to the man waiting, earnestly, steadily, strongly, believingly waiting through all obstacles.

All this is spoken of repeatedly as coming "in the latter days" or at "the end of the days." It will be noted that Daniel's visions quite fit in with what has gone before, and give most space to the crisis and the terrible king ruling then.

It will be further noted that there is a sort of limited calendar given of that specified time more full and explicit than before. The persecution of the Jew runs through twelve hundred and sixty days. Then apparently the power of the persecuting king is broken, or, at least, the persecution of the Jew ends. Then follows a period of seventy-five days with a glad result for the waiting devout Jew.

From the desecration of the temple until it is "cleansed" is to be twenty-three hundred evenings and mornings. That is, there would be twelve hundred and sixty days of persecution, seventy-five of special events not named after

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the persecution is stopped, and then a further period of two years, eight months and five days (reckoning thirty days to a month), a period apparently of readjustment before the new Jewish order is in full swing in Jerusalem.

The one-chaptered *Obadiah* is a message to the neighbouring nations of Edom. It speaks of a judgment coming to "all the nations," and *connects it directly* with a restoration of the Jew nation, as a purified holy nation, closely associated with God Himself.

Nahum is a message to Nineveh. It *connects* a terrific supernatural judgment coming on the enemies of the Jews, with a full happy restoration of the Jew nation.

The Messages of the Slow Breaking Dawn.

Now there remains the small group of books that grew up after the return from the Babylon exile, the *post-exilic* messages. There are four of these, Haggai, Zechariah, the second part of Isaiah, and Malachi. The thousands who have returned from exile to Palestine are still in subjection to Babylonian authority. Their situation is full of perplexities and difficulties.

Haggai comes first. Under his urgings the building of the temple has begun. He encourages the workers by reminding them of God's wondrous plans for the nation. There is coming a great shake-up in the heavens and in the earth and among all the nations. In connection with

this there is some One coming through whom will come great glory to the temple and so to the nation. And He would bring peace.

The description of the One coming is unique. The fair translation seems to be "the Desire," or "the One desired or delighted in by all nations."¹ The shake-up or overthrow is to be of the organized governmental world-system, "the *throne* of the kingdoms" and "the *strength* of the kingdoms of the nations." Militarism will be overthrown. And the despised Jew nation ruling among and over the nations is to be God's sign or evidence of authority and power.²

Zechariah overlaps *Haggai*, the two men giving their messages at the same time. There is to be a time of judgment on the nations, which have "plundered" the Jew, and through this the Jew would come into his own. God Himself would dwell in the midst of the restored Jew nation. There would be a change of heart among the peoples, many coming voluntarily to Jewish leadership. And all this comes by direct action of God, who is "waked up" to right the wrongs of earth.³

The promised restoration of the Jew as a purified nation is to be through a king coming of Jewish stock.⁴ This coming king is to be a *priest-king*, and under his rule distant nations would ally themselves voluntarily in building up the

¹ *Haggai* 2 : 6-9.

² *Haggai* 2 : 21-23.

³ *Zechariah* 2 : 8-13.

⁴ The entire third chapter ; note verses 8 and 9.

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Jew nation.¹ Jerusalem would be commonly spoken of as "the city of truth" and "the holy mountain," the land would enjoy greatly increased fertility, and the Jew would become a blessing among all the nations who had reckoned him a curse. The nations would recognize God's blessing upon the new Jew nation as a thing so marked that there would be a great eagerness to be allied with the Jew.²

Then comes the famous classic bit, which is quoted in connection with Christ's entry into Jerusalem that last tragic week: "Behold thy king cometh . . . lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass." But here with full kingly authority, He is seen destroying militarism, speaking peace to the nations, and ruling them from the Euphrates clear to the outermost rims of the earth.³ Then in a striking bit the Jew is used as God's instrument of judgment on *Greece*. In the crisis of judgment God Himself is seen overhead, executing judgment, and delivering His people.⁴

At the close of Zechariah occurs a most remarkable passage running through chapters twelve to fourteen. Jerusalem is to become an *occasion* of judgment on all the nations of earth gathered there. It is as though some irresistible fascination of hatred for the Jew had become a ruling passion among men. Through this judg-

¹ Zechariah 6 : 12-15.

² Zechariah 8 : 3, 7, 13, 20-23.

³ Zechariah 9 : 9-10.

⁴ Zechariah 9 : 13-17.

ment the Jew nation is to be fully delivered and restored. It is to be a radically changed nation.

In the utmost extremity of their awful crisis the Jew would see some One coming out of the heavens for his deliverance. They would recognize Him as the one whom they had "pierced." They would be filled with deepest penitence, through the spirit of grace poured out upon them. This is the substance of chapters twelve and thirteen.

Then chapter fourteen goes back over the story with fuller detail. It is a day of Jehovah, a day of judgment on all nations. The nations are gathered against Jerusalem. There is a terrible siege of the city. Things go to the worst extreme. The city is taken, the houses looted, and all the unnameable horrors of war time run riot.

Then comes the deliverance. It is by supernatural intervention. Jehovah Himself appears out of the heavens. He is attended by "all the holy ones." His feet stand on Olivet before Jerusalem on the east. There is a great earthquake. Olivet splits into two halves toward the north and south, the line of cleavage running east and west. And so the Jews are delivered.

The day when this happens is marked out as a strange, exceptional day in its outer appearance. It's a dark day. The sun fails to shine. It is not day, for the daylight's gone. It is not night, for the clocks show daytime. Then at eventide the natural light comes back again.

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There's a complete change in the surface of the earth at Jerusalem, caused by the earthquake. Instead of the irrigating canals and pools by which the city has always got its water, there are rivers of living water flowing freely, loosened out by the tremendous upheaval. They flow west to the Mediterranean and east to the Dead Sea. They are perennial. They never run dry.

God's method of making war or visiting judgment on the nations is outstandingly striking. There is a great tumult of discomfiture from God among the masses gathered against Jerusalem. They become terror-stricken. Their breakdown of self-confidence is complete. A strangely terrible fear seizes and holds them in a death-like grip. They take to fighting each other. There is a strange withdrawal of vitality from their bodies.¹

This supernatural visitation of judgment on the armies of the nations gathered turns the tables for the Jews. They become victors through God's intervention, and gather the spoils, of which there is a great abundance, gold and silver and apparel.

Then follows a new order of things on the earth. It is world-wide. The Jew becomes the premier nation. Jerusalem becomes the world capital. Annual pilgrimages are made there by all peoples for a holy harvest-home festival in the autumn. And this is taken as the touchstone of

¹ It is interesting to note here Judges 7: 22; 1 Samuel 14: 20; 2 Chronicles 20: 23.

loyalty to God. There will be failure of the common blessings of life for those failing in loyalty to God.

But Jerusalem is a new kind of capital, never seen or known before. Its very atmosphere is a strong, earnest devotion to God. The commonest trait of all great cities, the characteristic trait of the Jew, commercialism, is quite gone. There is no more a Canaanite, that is, a trader, there. Instead the unselfish spirit of the Christ will dominate.

Now, there is a very striking, tacit admission that all this sort of talk will seem like a mere Jew pipe-dream. It would seem the unlikeliest, the very last sort of thing that *could* occur. This tacit admission comes at the very beginning in the most solemn assurance of the entire reliability of this recital. It would all be done by the same creative power that was at work in the early creation time.

We come now to the second section of *Isaiah*. It seems probable that this rare Spirit-swayed man of the return period may have made journeys back and forth, preaching now at Jerusalem, and now to the colony of Jews at Babylon. There is a wooing message of rarest winsomeness and pleading earnestness calling to a new life. And there is also a constantly deepening bitter opposition to his messages and ministry.

Much of what is in these pages of glorious future conditions might be supposed to refer only to the return from Babylon to Jerusalem at

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the close of the captivity, *or* to find fulfilment in the spread of the Christian faith in all the world. Yet there is even in such portions an intense realism and a glory of *Jewish restoration* that such explanations do not at all satisfy. But there are certain passages that stand sharply out as not yet being fulfilled in their simple, clear first meaning. There are some twelve of these.

The Jew nation is to be used as a means of judgment on the nations in connection with its own restoration.¹ Further, under some coming leader it is to be a means of blessing to the nations, a blessing in which justice and truth, blended with gentleness, shall be established in the earth, and all evil conditions removed.² And in connection with this God would be dealing in judgment with the nations righting wrongs.³

The Jew nation itself is to be radically changed in character into a devout God-loving people through the Holy Spirit poured out upon it in the day of its restoration.⁴ And certain other nations are to become tributary.⁵ The Jew is to become the leading nation, *all* others being tributary, and giving help in gathering the scattered Jews from all parts of the earth to Palestine. This would come about through a judgment of God upon the nations because of their previous treatment of the Jew.⁶

This thing of Jewish leadership is emphasized

¹ Isaiah 41 : 15, 16.

² Isaiah 42 : 1-12.

³ Isaiah 42 : 13-17.

⁴ Isaiah 44 : 3-5, 21-23.

⁵ Isaiah 45 : 14.

⁶ Isaiah 49 : 22-26.

by repetition,¹ but it is to be a new kind of leadership; a teaching leadership. They are to be a teacher nation.² And the nations will come voluntarily and eagerly, and will give of their best to build up the Jew nation.³ It is reiterated that all this new glorious order comes *through* a judgment on the nations on behalf of the Jew,⁴ followed by the Jewish leadership.⁵

The intensely dramatic dialogue in chapter sixty-three pictures God Himself with blood-reddened garments acting in judgment upon the nations, on behalf of the Jew. And the action of judgment is in connection with Edom.⁶ Then there's another of the wondrous pictures of the new changed order of things. There is to be a marked increase of health, and in length of life, with a corresponding decrease in the sickness and weakness and disease that is epidemic everywhere and always. There's to be a radical change in the lower animal creation.⁷

And the book ends with a distinct summing up climax, a dramatic climax.⁸ There is a simple graphic description of a crisis of judgment at Jerusalem on the enemies of the Jew, as a vindicative of the Jew. Listen: "hear the word of the Lord, ye that reverently *believe* His word.

¹ Isaiah 54 : 3.

² Isaiah 55 : 4.

³ Isaiah 60 throughout ; note verses 1-5 ; 9-14, 16.

⁴ Isaiah 61 : 2-3.

⁵ Isaiah 61 : 4-9.

⁶ Isaiah 62 : 11-63 : 9 and on at the end of chapter 63 and into the next.

⁷ Isaiah 65 : 19-25.

⁸ Isaiah 66 : 5-20.

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Your brothers that hate you, that cast you out for your loyalty to His word, they say ironically, sneeringly, 'Let Jehovah be glorified (as you believe) that we may see your triumph.' *But* it is they that shall be put to shame, not you."

Then the coming day comes up before Isaiah's eye clear and distinct: "Hark! a voice of *confused tumult* from the city. Hark! an answering voice from the temple! Ah! it is the voice of God rendering a well earned recompense to His enemies and yours." And he goes on to assert that all this will come with unexpected suddenness when it does come.

This crisis is to be followed by a remarkable leadership of the Jew among the nations. The judgment on the nations at this time is to be world-wide, a righteous vindication by God Himself. All nations will come to recognize in it the goodness and power of God.

And one's ear is caught with the distinct statement that the new order of things, the kingdom, is to be a time of world-wide evangelization. The Jew becomes God's messenger to all nations, to the farthest extremes north and west and south and east, including those who have never heard of God, the great unevangelized majority. And these in turn come to love their Jewish missionaries and help in the movement to magnify Jerusalem, the city of God, where He dwells.

Malachi is the closing book of this, as of the whole prophetic group. The returned Jew is pretty well settled as a vassal people under their

Babylonian governor, and the regular temple services and sacrifices established. But it is a thoroughly worldly, unspiritual people, and the temple service wholly perfunctory.

There is a judgment coming on *the Jew* and on all the wicked. It will come as a crisis, suddenly, unexpectedly. Elijah would graciously be sent as a special messenger beforehand to prepare the people. Then God Himself would come to Jerusalem. This is preparatory to a "delightsome" Jewish restoration, which would be recognized by all nations.¹

There are *certain psalms* that are clearly woven with the same warp and shuttle threads. With this conception in mind, of a crisis of the nations coming, and God acting directly in the crisis in vindication of wrongs, and then a glorious kingdom following over all the earth, I say with this in mind, if one will read the Second Psalm, the latter part of the Twenty-second (verses 22-31, but in connection with what goes before), the connected group—Forty-sixth, Forty-seventh, and Forty-eighth, the Fiftieth, the Seventy-second, the connected group—Ninety-fourth to the One Hundredth, inclusive, and the One Hundred and Tenth, he will find that at least the writers here had the same general vision of which we have found these old Hebrew prophetic pages to be so full.

Let us make here a very brief comprehensive summing up of all these teachings in mere out-

¹ Malachi 3: 1-4, 12; 4: throughout.

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line. The full outline is found in chapters three and four of this little book. There is *a time of crisis* coming in the affairs of the earth. It will be first of all *a crisis of judgment on the Jew* through a great evil king at the head of a league of nations.

This will be turned into *a crisis of judgment on all the nations* of the world. And this in turn will be followed by *a Jewish restoration* as a nation through a great righteous King coming. Then there will be a new blessed order of things on the earth, under Jew leadership, with this great King reigning over the Jew and over the whole earth.

The Jew situation at the beginning of the crisis may be briefly summed up thus: the Jew has reorganized as a nation, after centuries of denationalization. He is settled in Palestine as his homeland. The temple has been rebuilt. And the old Jew system of sacrifices is in full swing. A seven-year treaty is made with the king of a northern league of nations.

It is at this point, when the treaty is made, that the thread of Jew history is picked up by the prophetic pens, after the long gap when the Jew though a race is not a nation. This seven-year treaty is abruptly broken by the king of the northern league when it has run out just half its length. It is at this point that the crisis begins for the Jew.

The world situation at the opening of the crisis is indicated as follows: there will be a ten-king-

domed confederacy or league of nations. This develops later into an eight-kingdomed league or coalition. This league will be north, or mainly north, of the Mediterranean Sea, and seems to extend to and include the Russian peoples lying north of the Black Sea and the Caucasus.

There is another great power lying mainly south of the Mediterranean, whether a confederacy of powers or not is not stated. But it is of sufficient numbers and power to attack and to cope with the northern league. These two powers or coalitions are in repeated armed conflict.

The head of the northern league is a king of outstanding dominating personality, who comes out of the kingdom of Greece, slips into the position of leadership by cunning craft, and remains at its head until the crisis is over. It is he who makes the seven-year treaty with the newly-formed Jew nation, and becomes the persecutor in their terrible crisis.

There is *a transition period* between the present order of things on the earth and the new order coming. It runs from the beginning of the time of the crisis up to the beginning of the new order of things. This transition period covers twenty-three hundred actual days, that is six years four months and twenty days, reckoning thirty to the month. It seems to be put in this way because the word year does not stand for an exact period of time through history.

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This period divides into *three* parts. The *Jew crisis* or persecution runs twelve hundred and sixty days or three and a half years. The *world crisis*, immediately following, runs apparently for seventy-five days. Then there is a time of readjustment before the new order is inaugurated, running through nine hundred and sixty-five days, that is two years eight months and five days.

Briefly, this is the general outlook of the reverent, thoughtful Hebrew about the future as the Old Testament period comes to its close. There is a great king coming, a king of the Jews; through Him there would be a wondrous Jew kingdom. The time of Jew suffering is then at an end. Instead, the new Jew kingdom would fill and bless all the world. This was the dominant thought with Simeon and Anna as the New Testament period begins and as they reverently hail the virgin Mary with her Babe in the temple.

Now I am not discussing the likelihood of these things being so, nor yet attempting to speculate as to how they would fit, or not fit, into the present world situation. My task is a much simpler one. I am simply gathering up what *seems* the consensus of statements of the prophetic writings, taken at their first meaning to those writing, regarding things that very evidently have not taken place.

And I am not expressing any personal judgment regarding these things. But I have a pro-

found conviction of the utter dependableness of this old Book of God for the future, as for the past, and for moral issues in the present. *The one thing* to stress is getting at in a simple, clear way, just what the Book does say.

And it is good as we close this look into the old pages of the Book to recall the striking word back in Isaiah. It gives the wise personal, practical attitude toward all this sort of thing during the present time.¹

A free translation of the thought is something like this: blessed are ye who, understanding about these coming things, meanwhile go steadily on doing faithfully the commonplace daily tasks, amid all sorts of circumstances and difficulties, steadily believing in the blessed outcome of sweet victory which God has planned.

The Messages of Our Lord and His Followers.

We turn now for a very brief run through the newer leaves of our Bible. These have been examined rather carefully for this sort of thing in the two little books already sent out. "Quiet Talks on our Lord's Return" deals with the teaching of the entire New Testament, and "Quiet Talks on the Crowned Christ" deals with the Book of the Revelation. Now, I mean merely to gather up rapidly the main teaching paragraphs of the New Testament so as to get a broad general summary of the whole Bible.

¹ Isaiah 32: 20.

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It is striking to note the radical changes that have taken place in the world movement during the gap of time between the Old and New Testaments. There has been a marked shift. The center of civilization has swung from Asia to Europe, from the Orient to the Occident. The center of world leadership has swung racially from Shem to Japheth.

The Babylonian power has quite gone. The Grecian has risen, reached flood, and gone. And now Rome has sway. Nebuchadnezzar's image has worn off its head and arms and thighs in the action of life and is down to its legs. The gold and silver and brass values in the principle of autocratic governmental rule have given way to the iron. The seat of world empire has moved from the Euphrates to the Tiber.

It is interesting to note some of the characteristic differences between the two parts of the Bible as we pass from one to the other. The Old Testament is distinctively the Kingdom Book, after the few opening pages. It traces the Jewish story, and looks forward wistfully and steadily toward a Jewish world kingdom.

The New is chiefly the Church Book, not wholly, but chiefly. It begins in the Gospels with the King claiming the kingdom, and giving wonderful samples of kingdom days and kingdom power. It ends in the book of Revelation with the kingdom established after a sharp crisis. All between these two relates to the Church.

In the Old there is no Church. It comes into

being on the day of Pentecost. The Gospels are really sample days of the kingdom. The Church is not named there except in a few instances,¹ and then only toward the close of Jesus' life when His rejection is clearly foreshadowed, and only to the inner groups of disciples who are the nucleus of the Church.

The teachings of Jesus to the inner circle of the apostles, the Book of the Acts, and notably the Epistles, span the whole Church period. Here is given the characteristics of the Church period clear to its end, with a distinct growth in teaching as the group of epistles, taken in chronological order, develops. The Book of Revelation is addressed to the Church, and is meant to teach the Church about the group of events that will come at the end of the Church period, just before the kingdom period begins.

We turn now to the New Testament, and as in the Old we will follow mainly the chronological order. The point of view of these writers is quite clear. To them Jesus is the promised King of the Old Testament pages. He has come to carry out the Old Hebrew prophecies and set up the kingdom. These men are Jews. Naturally the old prophecies colour all their thoughts. They live in the shadow of their sacred writings. The Old Testament Jewish outlook and hope are theirs.

The apostles in the Gospels have no thought of Jesus being rejected and crucified. Though

¹ Matthew 16: 18; 18: 17.

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persistently told of this they can't seem to take it in. Throughout the Book of Acts, and in the Epistles, mostly interwoven into its pages, the leaders' one thought is that as Jesus was rejected at His coming He must return to carry out the original plan. It is His rejection that necessitates a second coming.

But first of all come the teachings of our Lord Himself, in the Gospels. There are four teaching paragraphs in *Matthew*. Along in the closing year Jesus sends out the Twelve on a special mission to the Jews in Palestine.¹ The instructions given them are clearly of local or immediate application. But there comes a break or shift between verses sixteen and seventeen.

The paragraph, verses seventeen to twenty-three inclusive, speaks of experiences of sore persecution that the disciples did not have at that time. This mission to the Jews by His disciples is connected here with His coming again. When He does come the Jew appears to be nationalized. The phrase "the cities of Israel" would naturally suggest that. So that when He comes again His disciples (the Church) would be witnessing in the midst of sore persecution, to the Jews nationalized in Palestine. The passage fits into the method in the prophecies of touching the present, then reaching *forward* to some future time, ignoring events in between.

The transfiguration scene is introduced with the statement that some of His disciples would

¹ Matthew 10: 5-42.

“see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”¹ Jesus in a blaze of divine glory accompanied by Moses, who had died, and by Elijah, who had been caught up without dying, conferring together on a mountain, this is a picture of how the Son of Man will come into His kingdom.

Toward the tragic end there is a phrase used that catches one’s ear and eye.² Peter is asking about rewards. Jesus says, “*In the re-generation* when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” The Syriac version correctly translates the opening words, “*in the new age* or new world.” That is to say in the new order of things, the Church will be associated with the King in the administration of the kingdom, ruling over the Jew as in turn he rules over the world.

Chapter twenty-four proves to be one of the great key-passages on this subject, giving rather definite, clear outlines. Jesus is seated on Olivet with four leaders, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, looking over at Jerusalem. He speaks of its utter destruction which would mean the utter defeat and destruction of the Jew nation.

They ask three questions. When would this great disaster be? When was He coming, *i. e.*, in power to reverse the disastrous conditions and set up the new order? What would be the evidence to them beforehand that He was about to come? Clearly two things are grouped in their

¹ Matthew 16: 28-17: 8.

² Matthew 19: 28.

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minds, the Jew disaster and His own coming in power to set up the new Jew kingdom.

It should be noticed that in what follows Jesus is talking to four of His apostles. They are Jews by blood, but they are *not* Jews *representatively*. For they had broken with their nation in following Jesus. They are representatives of the Church, formed later, with themselves as the leaders. So the words are spoken *to the Church* through these leaders.

It will make things clearer to note the meaning of two words used in this talk. The English word *generation*¹ may mean either a race or family stock, or all the persons living at one time. The word which Jesus actually used here has the same alternation of meaning. The sense of the passage in each case must determine what word should be used in translation. It becomes quite clear that the grouping of events spoken of here has not occurred. The generation of persons living at that time *has* passed away, but the Jewish *race* has not. The sentence would more accurately read "this *race* shall not pass away."

The word *elect* occurs three times.² It clearly means either the Jew or the Church. It might mean either. In verse twenty-two it might mean either. But in verse twenty-four it clearly means the Church, for the Jews were being led astray then, and have been ever since about their *Messiah*. The effort spoken of here is to deceive, if

¹ Matthew 24:34.

² Matthew 24:22, 24, 31.

possible, the followers of Christ, that is, the Church. This fixes the meaning of the word elect in this talk.

Now look at Jesus' answer to their threefold question. It falls naturally into three parts. The common characteristics of the time, before and during the events talked of, would be wars, rumours of wars, famines and earthquakes. Among His followers there would be disloyalty, dissension, false religious teachers and a loss of personal devotion to Christ, with a great increase of missionary activities.¹

At some future time there would be a *persecution* or *tribulation*. It would be of Christ's followers, *i. e.*, "for *my name's sake*." It would begin with the desecration of the Jewish temple in the extreme way noted by Daniel, so linking it up with the persecution of the Jew, as occurring at the same time.²

This tribulation comes to an end and is followed "immediately" with a *visitation of judgments* by God on the world, marked by disturbances in the heavens affecting the whole life of the earth. In connection with this three things happen. "The sign of the Son of Man" is seen in the skies. *He* is not seen yet, but something supernatural that makes the crowds realize that He is in action, for there is an instant change of attitude toward Him. They "mourn" or are *penitent* for their conduct. Then Jesus Himself is seen coming on the clouds of heaven with

¹ Matthew 24: 4-14.

² Matthew 24: 9-28.

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great glory. And the "elect," i. e., Christ's followers, are caught up openly before all eyes with the great sound of a trumpet.

It will be noted carefully that the time of trouble commonly spoken of as the tribulation falls here into two parts. There is *the tribulation proper*, and then there is immediately following a *visitation of judgment*. The line of difference between this is most striking. The two stand in sharpest contrast. In the *tribulation* evil is at work persecuting God's people. In the *visitation of judgments* God is at work against the forces of evil. Satan's day is followed by "the day of the Lord," which has begun in this visitation of judgments. This talk really seems to give a simple broad program of events in the transition period.

It will be noted keenly that the destruction of Jerusalem, with a prediction of which this chapter begins, is directly connected with a persecution of the Church. In this it differs sharply from the destruction which occurred under Titus. It seems to be speaking of another destruction under different circumstances, and so points to the future.

The remainder of the talk gives further detailed information about this stupendous twin event. Jesus tells His disciples that by intelligently watching the course of events one would know relatively when He was coming. The Jew race would be preserved intact until these events had worked out. This would be one of the

evidences of the certainty of these things coming.

The world crowds would be utterly indifferent to the evidences of these things approaching, and would be completely taken by surprise. When Jesus comes some would be caught up out of the earth, His followers, the "elect" already spoken of, and the rest would remain on the earth. The exact time of His coming is utterly unknown, but the fact is even surer than that the sun and moon and stars shine.

And the emphasis of the last word is put on the particular effect of all this meanwhile on one's daily life. We are to be living so in the common round of life that whenever He does come we're glad, and don't have to get ready, because we *are* ready.

Luke's account of this same Olivet talk opens with two special warnings.¹ The first is against those coming who would *pretend* to be Christ. The second is of marked interest. They were to beware of the teaching that His coming might occur at any moment. "Many shall come . . . saying 'the time is at hand,' *go ye not after them.*" For certain occurrences would come first, and be evidence to them of His own approaching advent.

Their talk then follows essentially the same lines as in Matthew and Mark, namely, a tribulation of God's people, followed by a visitation of judgment upon evil. The visitation would be

¹ Luke 21: 8.

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marked not only by a shake-up in both earth and heavens, but before this by terrifying signs in the heavens, and the crowds would be terror-stricken by them.

There is here a striking appeal to His followers, in view of the difficulty of keeping true to Him during the persecution.¹ A free reading will give a much more accurate impression of what He says in this plea, than do the English versions. "But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that *ye may get the victory* (in your personal lives) over all these prevailing evil influences (that will mark the time) and *so stand accepted before the Son of Man.*"

This is the substance of the teaching bits in these four Gospels from Jesus' own lips. He is coming back to set up a new order of things on the earth. In connection with His coming there will be a visitation of judgments on evil. This will be preceded by a persecution of Christ's followers.

This latter is connected with a witnessing by His disciples to the Jews gathered as a nation in Palestine. At His coming His followers will be caught up into the heavens, and all the others left on the earth. And in the new order of things on the earth His followers, or some of them, are to be associated with Himself in the administration of affairs.

And now a look at the *Book of The Acts*. The startling leave-taking of Jesus from His disciples,

¹ Luke 21: 36.

on Olivet, up into the air out of sight, is accompanied by the statement given by the two men or angels,—“this Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven.”¹ This would naturally fix the *fact* of His return, as well as the *manner* of it, firmly in their mind as the chief objective in coming days.

Peter’s sermon on Pentecost² connects the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which they had just experienced with the passage in Joel. But he does not say that it was a fulfilment of the Joel passage, as of course it was only in part. Joel saw the Spirit poured out on “*all flesh.*” Here He is poured out on a limited group, and in succeeding days on other groups. The wondrous signs that Joel says will accompany the outpouring of which he speaks do not occur.

Peter’s point of view is gotten in his quotation from the One Hundred and Tenth Psalm, taken with a sentence in his next sermon in the fourth chapter,—“ . . . Jesus, whom the heaven must receive *until the time of the restoration of all things*” spoken of by the prophets. This outpouring was a blessed prelude to the full outpouring at some future day, in connection with the tremendous occurrences in earth and heaven, when Christ would come out of the heaven and *restore all things* to the ideal held in His own heart.

The first Church council at Jerusalem makes

¹ Acts 1:11.

² Acts 2:14 and on.

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clear, further, the point of view of these Church leaders, and the objective in all their intense activities.¹ Naturally it rests back wholly on the Old Testament outline. James, the presiding officer of the council, makes the summing up which is accepted as the council's deliverance on the subject being considered.

And this really presents a future program or outline of future events as they saw them. The preaching which they were doing was to prepare the way for a Jewish restoration and through that there would be a world-wide movement for teaching men of God. Clearly to them the Jewish restoration was through the personal return of Christ.

And now a brief look at the Epistles, omitting mere allusions, and taking the outstanding teaching paragraphs. Usually each paragraph speaks of some one phase, all together giving the connected outline.

The *First letter* to the *Thessalonian Church* speaks of what Christ's return would mean to His followers, both dead and living.² The Lord would come down out of the heavens "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," a threefold publicity. Then the believing dead would be raised, the living believers would be joined with them as they are caught up into Christ's presence somewhere in the heavens.

¹ Acts 15, and note verses 14-18.

² 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18.

The *Second letter* to the *Thessalonians* speaks of the things that will happen immediately *before* Christ's return, so that they may have a more intelligent understanding on the subject.¹ This letter seems to have been written to correct some mistaken notions and teachings. Some seemed to be teaching that Christ's return for His own was impending, just at hand, might happen at any time. Paul explains that *certain events will come first*.

There would be a falling away from the true faith in the Church. There is now a *restraint upon evil* in the world. At some future day that restraint would be *withdrawn*. Then there would forge to the front in the world a *great evil leader*. And he would be *destroyed* by the blazing forth of the arrival or full coming of Jesus.

This *evil leader* is called "the man of sin," or "the man of lawlessness." He is "the son of perdition." He opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or is an object of worship. He sits in the temple of God (that is, the Jewish temple at Jerusalem), and sets himself forth *as God*. His sway is marked by deceit and lying and by miracles, supernatural Satanic miracles.

The present restraint upon evil is said to be by a person. It seems clear that there can be only one person meant, the *Holy Spirit*, who came down on the day of Pentecost and formed the Church by His presence in it. This restraint

¹2 Thessalonians 2: 1-12.

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will be withdrawn. That is, the Holy Spirit will reverse the action of Pentecost.

Then He came upon the Church. Now He withdraws from the Church. He was in individual believers before Pentecost. He will remain in individual believers after this withdrawal. That He withdraws is tremendously significant of the condition of the Church. It is a forced withdrawal. The "falling away" has become the dominant factor there. It is a heart-breaking bit of truth.

His withdrawal gives evil free rein. The lawless one comes to the front and has sway for a time. And then he is slain by the blazing out of the presence of Christ as He arrives on the earth.

One phase of "*the day*" for believers is touched upon in the *First letter to Corinth*.¹ As believers are caught up *the fire test* of the mere presence of Christ, the Man of Fire, will be applied to their character and life. All in them that can't stand that presence will become as ashes.

The remarkable resurrection chapter of this letter, the Fifteenth, has two pertinent paragraphs. There is first a sort of broad program of events given.² Christ's own resurrection was a first-fruits. At His return His own will be raised up even as He was. That is, there will be a partial resurrection, a resurrection of believers. Then follows the "Kingdom," which runs until

¹1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

²1 Corinthians 15:23-26.

all contrary rule and authority on the earth is quite overcome. Even "the last enemy shall be abolished (or made inoperative)—*death*."

Then there is a bit of "mystery," that is really *information for the inner circle*, the believers.¹ There would be a radical "change" in the bodies of believers, adapting them to the new conditions, as the trumpet tells of the approach of Christ. Believers who had died would be raised out of their graves, and living believers would experience a change in their bodies.

In *Romans* there is a striking bit concerning the whole created world about us, animal and vegetable. The blight of sin is there, too. We don't know God's real creation. It's blighted, wonderful as it is. But at His coming there's to be a new touch of life there, delivering it too, and changing it back to Eden Ideals.²

Then there is the great Jew section of *Romans*.³ And this, be it noted, is a part of the Gospel Paul preached everywhere. For this *Romans* epistle is the outline of Paul's Gospel. The Jew was not *utterly* cast off by God as His messenger nation. Their rejection was *partial*, for a certain limited time. Even this had been a means of blessing to the non-Jewish nations.

The period of Gentile or non-Jewish world leadership was limited in time. It was only for a certain well-defined though unknown length of time. At the close of that time there would be

¹ 1 Corinthians 15: 50-52.

² Romans 8: 20-22.

³ Romans 9 to 11.

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a Jew restoration. Jewish world leadership would displace the Gentile leadership. The Jew kingdom, under Jesus their Messiah-Christ, would be world-wide, and of untold blessing to all the race.

There is a teaching paragraph in *2 Peter*,¹ emphasizing the *judgment phase* of the day of the Lord. It seems to refer to the earth being wholly burned up and replaced by a new earth. If so, this would refer to what takes place in the final crisis at the *close* of the kingdom time as referred to in the beginning of the twenty-first chapter of Revelation. But it seems possible, even probable, that a better translation would make clear that it refers rather to the shake-up that takes place in the visitation of judgments following the tribulation.

There will be strong antagonism to the teaching of the second coming of Christ as the age runs toward its close. But the long delay is a touch of God's patient love. He is not unmindful nor slack concerning His promises. But a strong long-suffering toward men makes Him hold out the present day of opportunity to the very last limit.

John's chief Epistle gives much emphasis to the great evil leader of the crisis-time.² He gives him another title, the *Antichrist*. It is a most significant title. God's only Begotten is called the Christ, equivalent to the Hebrew Messiah. The Antichrist is the very opposite of God's

¹ 2 Peter 3: 3-13.

² 1 John 2: 18-23; 4: 1-6.

Christ. He is the one who is opposed to Christ and to His coming back to reign on the earth.

John gives here also significant space to the *spirit* of the Antichrist. That spirit was even then not only in the world, but in the Church. Then he defines the spirit of the Antichrist by which it may always be recognized. The touchstone by which to recognize a true Christian leader is his being under the sway of the Holy Spirit, a Spirit-controlled man.

The distinguishing mark of the Holy Spirit is *the passion for Jesus*. This is illustrated by the Book of Acts, which is distinctively the Holy Spirit Book, marked by His presence and control. That Book is fairly aflame with the Jesus passion. John's own Gospel tells what the meaning is to him. The Book is flooded with the Jesus passion.

Now this, John says here, is the touchstone. The absence of this, or the opposite of it, reveals the Antichrist spirit. There may be a *flat denial* of the distinctive deity of Jesus; or a use of certain accepted proper phrases with a plain *thinning* out of *the distinctive meaning*; or there may be something yet more common, simply an omission of reference to *Jesus*, a talking of God and the Father with marked omission of reference to Jesus.

John here says that all of this is the deadly, subtle *Antichrist spirit*. It is the very genius, the mark of identification, of the Antichrist. This spirit will spread and strengthen till its in-

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spiration, the Antichrist himself, appears in person on the scene.

Jude's little one-chaptered epistle speaks of this same *spirit* of Antichrist. There were certain leaders in the Church, even in his day, who denied the only Master and Lord, Jesus the Christ.

The Book of the *Revelation* will be gathered up quite briefly, as it has been rather fully treated in "Quiet Talks on the Crowned Christ of the Revelation." It deals almost wholly with the crisis time, sets it in relation to the new order following, and gives briefly a program of events *after* the new order has run its full course.

Chapters four to twenty, verse three inclusive, deal with the crisis-time. Chapters four and five describe Jesus stepping again *directly* into the action of affairs on the earth. Then follows a series of views of the crisis from different angles so as better to understand the whole thing.

It will be remembered that we found that the crisis time falls into two parts, the tribulation proper, and the visitation of judgments immediately following. The distinguishing mark of each of these two parts is simple and easy to pick out. In the tribulation evil is working against God's people. In the visitation of judgments God is acting in judgment against evil.

*The First View*¹ outlines broadly *the whole*

¹ Revelation 6-7.

crisis time, both the tribulation and the visitation of judgments. The period begins as a time of peace. Antichrist seems to appear first as a man of peace, armed peace.¹ Then follows quickly the tribulation,² and then the visitation of judgments put very briefly.³

But it should be keenly noted that there is a *parenthesis* between these two. Chapter seven is the parenthesis. It fits in between verses eleven and twelve of chapter six. This can easily be noted by observing that in the judgments the earth is badly broken up by a great earthquake, and that chapter seven beginning with the command that the earth was *not* to be "hurt" *until* the events of this seventh chapter have taken place.

In this parenthesis there are two significant things. The Jew nation in its corporate completeness is "sealed" by the coming upon it of the Holy Spirit. This is the time when the Jews recognize and accept Jesus as their Messiah.⁴ Then John suddenly sees a great numberless company of the redeemed who have come up *out of the tribulation*, the great one, and are before the throne of God. This is the time when the blood-washed Church is caught up out of the earth.⁵ There the parenthesis closes. And now the earth is "hurt" as the visitation of judgments takes place.⁶

¹ Revelation 6 : 2.

² Revelation 6 : 3-11.

³ Revelation 6 : 12-17.

⁴ Revelation 7 : 1-8.

⁵ Revelation 7 : 9-17.

⁶ Revelation 6 : 12-17.

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*The Second View*¹ outlines the *second* phase of the crisis period, namely, the *visitation of judgments*. It falls into two parts, partial judgments on the earth,² and then a loosing out of the powers of evil as though to combat God and show their defiance of Him and His judgments. And there follows a terrific sway of demons on the earth.³

They are loosed at "the great River Euphrates," as though that is the center or headquarters on the earth of the Satanic forces. It will be noticed that this comes as further detail of the brief statement in chapter six, verses twelve to the close.

Chapter ten is a personal interview with John, with certain features which he is not to tell, and with the most solemn assurance that God will certainly carry out His purpose as outlined.

*The Third View*⁴ is of affairs in the city of Jerusalem during the tribulation. Two men, clothed in mourning to emphasize their message, bear witness to God's truth during the time of persecution. The length of the persecution and of their witnessing is put in two ways, forty-two months and twelve hundred and sixty days, exactly equivalent terms reckoning the month as thirty days.

These two men have power to work miracles, and to protect themselves supernaturally, till

¹ Revelation 8 and 9.

² Revelation 8 : 6-12.

³ Revelation 9 throughout.

⁴ Revelation 11 throughout.

their mission is finished. Then they are killed, then brought back to life, and are "caught up" into heaven in connection with a great earthquake. This is the point, at the close of the tribulation, when all the redeemed are caught up.

*The Fourth View*¹ outlines *the whole crisis period* but much more fully than in the first view. There is a recital, alternately, of happenings in the upper spirit world and on the earth. After the introductory part,² there is a scene in the upper world.³ There is a war on between Michael and Satan, resulting in Satan being defeated and cast out of the heavens down to the earth.

When cast down to the earth Satan at once begins to persecute the Jew nation. But it is "nourished," kept from being wiped out. This continues three and a half years or twelve hundred and sixty days. The same event runs through this portion of time, making clear that they are meant to be equivalents. He also persecutes "the rest of her seed." The symbolical woman is clearly meant to represent the Jew nation. And of course the Church was born in the Jew nation. None other than the Church could be meant by the phrase "the rest of her seed."

As Satan is cast down to the earth there forges to the front among men *a great evil leader*.⁴ He is Satan's special representative on earth, his

¹ Revelation 12-14.

² Revelation 12 : 1-6.

³ Revelation 12 : 7-12.

⁴ Revelation 13.

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plenipotentiary, full-powered. He combines all evil traits, and is blasphemous to the extremest degree. He makes war with "the saints" and overcomes them within a limit of forty-two months. The persecution of God's people is carried to the utmost extremes. It is most significant that three times it speaks of his having been some one who had been slain and is now living again. He awakens universal wonder and admiration, and has a chief associate who stirs the crowds on his behalf.

As the persecution is at its worst the scene abruptly shifts again to *the upper spirit world*.¹ John is surprised suddenly to see a great company before the throne. There are one hundred and forty-four thousand of them, the number of corporate completeness. These are they who have been redeemed out of the earth. The Church has been caught up and away. The tribulation has run its course.

Once again the scene shifts to the earth.² The visitation of judgments is introduced with a series of warnings: a warning of judgment impending; a warning that the Babylon system is doomed. There's a pleading call to the crowds on the earth, and some hear the call and resist the evil at the cost of their lives. Then the visitation of judgments itself occurs, stated in vivid language, and occurring in two parts. It will be noted again that the Church is caught

¹ Revelation 14: 1-5.

² Revelation 14: 6-20.

away between the persecution and the visitation of judgments.

*The Fifth View*¹ deals with the second part of the crisis, the *visitation of judgments*, when the righteous "wrath of God" is poured out. There is a visitation of judgment upon the earth or land, the sea, the rivers, and the sun, causing great distress; then upon "the throne of the beast." And then upon the Euphrates River,² as though it is connected with the throne or government of the Antichrist.

Then there's a combative movement on the part of the evil powers. Through the activity of demons they seek to rally "the kings of the whole world" to fight against God, at a place called Armageddon.³ And the final act in the visitation of judgment is a great storm and earthquake and the full victory of God against this supreme attempt of organized evil. It will be noted that Armageddon is *not* a battle of nations among themselves, but of *all* against God.

*The Sixth View*⁴ deals with *the system of evil* in the world upon which judgment is visited immediately after the tribulation. It appears here as a blasphemous beast carrying a gorgeously attired woman. Upon the woman's forehead is seen the inscription, "mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth." The system of evil in the world is commonly spoken of in Scripture

¹ Revelation 15, 16.

² Revelation 16 : 1-12.

³ Revelation 16 : 13-16.

⁴ Revelation 17 and 18.

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as Babylon. It has sometimes operated through governments, and sometimes through the organized Church system of the world. Here at the last the Church is discarded as an agency¹ and the system finds its embodiment in a city.²

This system of evil, throughout history, passes through seven governmental phases, and at the end it becomes a ten-kingdomed confederacy or a league under one head, the great evil leader.³ This leader has an exceptional uncanny career, running through four phases. He *was*; then he *was not*; then he *comes up out of the abyss*, and then he goes into perdition. He seems to be the human embodiment of Satan, one who has been in action as a man before, and is now brought back from the dead for this crisis.

At the last this league of nations under this terrible Satan-leader unite to fight against "the Lamb." Armageddon is a war against God. And then these are all defeated decisively by our Lord Jesus when He appears. When our Lord appears at this point of conflict with evil and victory over it, He is attended not by all of His followers, but by those "called and chosen and faithful."

That is, those who have answered the *call* to salvation, responded to the service for which they were *chosen*, and were obediently *faithful* to the Master in that bit of service. Chapter eighteen gives the detail of the fall of this great system

¹ Revelation 17 : 16, 17.

² Revelation 17 : 18.

³ Revelation 17 : 9-13.

of evil. And here the fallen Babylon is said to become the hold or prison house of demons. It will be recalled that it was from the Euphrates that the vast demon hordes were loosened out in chapter nine.

The Seventh View,¹ like the Fifth and Sixth, gives a part of *the visitation of judgments*, the closing scene, the battle of Armageddon between the forces of God and of Satan. This will be recognized as the detail of chapter sixteen, verses fourteen to sixteen. The heavens open and Jesus appears in power and glory, accompanied by the purified ones. He comes in vengeance or in vindication of God. The only weapon He uses is the sword of His mouth. The defeat follows of all the forces arrayed against Him. This is the point at which the great evil leader is slain.

Now follows the new order of things. Christ reigns on the earth. His faithful ones reign with Him. Some of these have been raised from the dead. The unbelieving dead are not raised at this time.

Then follows a quite new bit. This new order is not the final thing. Satan is loosed again; there's a final crisis, and a final defeat for him. Then a resurrection of all the rest of the dead, the final adjustments and the new heavens and earth.

Now let us try to make a *brief comprehensive summing up* of these New Testament teachings

¹ Revelation 19-20 : 3.

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in bare outline. There is coming a *great crisis* to the earth, through an evil world leader. This crisis falls into two parts, a tribulation or persecution for the Jew and for the Church, and then a visitation of judgment upon evil.

This crisis comes to a close by *the personal return of the Lord Jesus*. There are two phases or parts to His return. The first is this: there will come something, some evidence in the heavens that will indicate His approach to the earth, and will be so recognized commonly by all. At this evidence of His approach the believing dead shall be raised from their graves, living believers will experience some change in their bodies, and these two groups shall be caught up into Jesus' presence in the heavens. Then will immediately follow on the earth a visitation of partial judgments.

The second phase of Jesus' coming is this: at some time later He will openly appear out of the heavens accompanied by some of His followers for the final act of the visitation of judgments. Then will follow the new order of things on the earth, Christ reigning, and some of His followers associated with Him in the reigning.

The *world situation* at the time when the crisis begins, briefly, is as follows: there will be a ten-kingdomed confederacy under a remarkable blasphemous self-assertive king. There will be an utter indifference to these impending events, men pursuing their accustomed round up to the very moment when the crisis, and then our Lord,

comes. It looks as though there would be a great city of world commerce and shipping in the valley of the Euphrates at or near old Babylon.

The situation in the Church at the opening of the crisis, briefly, is as follows: there will be a marked falling away from the simple Gospel of the Crucified Christ. There will be a common rejection of Christ's coming personally a second time, and more, a mocking and scoffing attitude toward the matter.

The Holy Spirit will have withdrawn from the Church as a Church, though of course not from individual believers. It will be because of the practical ignoring of His presence and leadership. The *spirit of the Antichrist* will be animating the teaching and leadership of the Church either in a flat denial of the deity of Jesus, or a practical or actual ignoring of the distinctive Christ message.

The Jew situation at the time. The Jew will be back in Palestine, renationalized, with the temple rebuilt, and the old system of sacrifices in full swing. He will have made a seven-year treaty with the king at the head of the ten-kingdomed league.

And now I want to try to gather up into *one brief, broad summary* the teachings of the entire Book, Old and New Testaments, in bare outline.

There is to be a time of crisis on the earth. The situation at the time in the world, in the Church, and in Jewry, will be as just described. The crisis will come through the leadership of a

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great evil king at the head of a league of nations. It will center about the east end of the Mediterranean Sea. It will pass through two stages.

First will be *a persecution* carried to great extremes, *of the Jew and also of the Church*, the followers of Christ. It runs through a little less than three and a half of our actual years. Then there is an exact reversal of the situation. There comes a visitation of partial judgment by God on evil. This apparently runs through seventy-five days.

This crisis is brought to a close by the *personal return* of the Lord Jesus to the earth. His return is in two phases. There will be some supernatural evidence in the blue heavens over our heads that He is approaching. It will be commonly so recognized. *At this time* the Jews recognize that Jesus is their Messiah and they experience a change of heart by the touch of the Holy Spirit. The believing dead are raised, and together with all living believers, are caught up out of the earth up into the presence of the approaching Christ. The persecution ends. And the crowds left on the earth become penitent.

The second phase comes a little later, apparently seventy-five days later. During that time there has been the visitation of plagues, which is followed by an organized movement of all the nations against God and against the Jew as His peculiar people. Christ appears openly in the heavens at Olivet, attended by His re-

deemed ones. The Jews who have been suffering a terrible siege at Jerusalem are delivered and the forces of evil utterly defeated.

The personal return of Christ introduces a *new order of things* on the earth, commonly called the kingdom. In this new order He reigns over the Jew nation and over all the earth. The Jew becomes the leading nation of the earth, but he is an utterly changed Jew. The Church is associated with Christ in the conduct of the kingdom. And the new order brings the fullest blessing to all.

The transition period between the old and the new order of things will be roughly a little less than six and a half years, actually twenty-three hundred days. This divides into three stages. *The persecution* of the Jew and the Church runs a little less than three and a half of our years, actually twelve hundred and sixty days. *The visitation of judgments* immediately following runs apparently seventy-five days. Then there is a *time of readjustment* before the new order is fully inaugurated, of some two years and eight months, actually nine hundred and sixty-five days.

As we close this long chapter, please note *the practical attitude* one should have toward all this. Two bits come to mind. One from the lips of Isaiah, already quoted, "blessed are ye who, understanding about these coming events, meanwhile go quietly on, doing faithfully the day's simple, common tasks, amid all sorts of

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fixed with a raptured look on the Babe, and his arms stretched out as though to take Him.

Wondering, yet under a gentle compulsion of spirit to yield, the young mother permitted him to take her child. And the old saint in low, hushed voice, yet clear, vibrant tones, a reverent rapture lighting up his wrinkled face, said,

“Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart, Lord,
According to Thy Word, in peace;
For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,
Which Thou hast prepared before the face
of all people;
A light to lighten the nations;
And the glory of Thy people Israel.”

He recognized in the young Babe the promised Messiah of his people and the Saviour of the world. His mind and his eyes were lightened by reverent study of the old Hebrew Scriptures, *and* by the Holy Spirit. He discerned the stupendous thing that was happening. The Christ had come. This Babe was He.

And the young mother and her husband listened and watched with tense spirit, and marked keenly his words. Then the old man raised his frail hands tremblingly and spoke the benediction of God upon them and their holy charge. And they bowed reverently to receive the blessing.

A little group had gathered watching and listening and wondering. And as the old man's

hands lowered, a woman named Anna standing on the edge of the group spoke out. She was very old and gray and bent and frail. She was a familiar figure in the temple, there daily, and almost constantly, and well known for her holy, devoted life.

She too recognized the Child even as the old man had done, and fervently thanked God for what was happening. And then turning she spoke to the small group gathered, of the wondrous fulfilment of God's purposes for their nation through this Babe.

Gradually the little group scattered. And the young mother with her Babe, and her husband, wended their way out of the buildings down the hill toward their simple lodgings in the city.

The most stupendous event of history, now commonly so recognized, had begun. Yet it was unrecognized. None saw or understood. This man-Babe would change the calendar of imperial Rome and of the world. He would be the occasion of the break-up of the Hebrew nation, because of their break-away from God's plan.

He would be the cause of the nation coming to its greatest glory, some day, centuries after. He would be the means of the whole world being morally revolutionized. The Hebrew Sacred Book was aflood with the story of His coming. Yet politician and priest, Bible student and trader, the cultured, the wealthy, and the common crowd—none sensed the situation.

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Just two persons outside the small inner personal circle directly concerned, discerned, recognized, understood, what was happening. Yet looking back we all see plainly enough now the clear evidences given, the shepherds' open vision, the inquiring wise men, the exceptional star, the nation's officialdom astir with questionings, and the remarkable fulfilment in detail of the Scripture regarding the particulars of His birth.

Discernment is rare. Spirit discernment, as well as mental, sane and clear, of events, is simple *and* rare. Yet any one may have it in some good degree, for it's a matter of cultivation. A will strongly held in tune with God's, habitual brooding over the Book of God, the life held true, and the spirit held ever open upward, will bring some simple understanding of God's plans. It will bring discernment of how things are working out. Both Simeon and Anna are illustrations of this.

We are standing just now at a great turning of the road in world affairs. This is commonly recognized by all. The world will never again be the same. Epochal events have taken place, and *are taking place*. It is a rare privilege to be living at such a time. And it is a rare opportunity to study the world situation and try to discern simply, clearly, sanely, the significance of present events.

The New World Unity.

Shall we not then climb the mountain top

where one can see far, and with Bible in hand, and knees habitually bent, shade our eyes from the near-by lower lights that are so apt to distract, and try to get some clear, broad view of the *whole world outlook* of our own time.

We have been making a review of the teachings of the Bible regarding the future. There is coming a stupendous, unprecedented crisis, then immediately the Christ, then the Kingdom. Certain things have been noted as characterizing the world situation as the crisis opens. Four of these stand out: the renationalization of the Jew, a coalition of European powers, a possible city of world commerce in the valley of the Euphrates, and certain conditions and tendencies within the Church.

Now with these in mind let us take a thoughtful look at the world situation of the present moment. It is a fascinating situation from any point of view. History is in the making before our very eyes. But we want now to look only for those things that properly belong to our purpose in these studies.

The biggest thing at the moment is the Peace Conference at Paris. It can be said thoughtfully that it is the most remarkable statecraft gathering of history. It is distinctively a world gathering. The nearest approach to it is the Congress of Vienna in 1814.

But that was Europe. This is the whole world. There monarchs ruled. Here there are no monarchs, but leading statesmen of Europe,

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Asia and the Americas. And most of these, and all of the chief leaders among them, are elected by the common vote.

Gathered with them are hundreds of experts, military and naval, in finance, economics, geographical lines, map-making, statistics, racial groupings, labour interests, and socialistic teachings; with interpreters and translators by the score, and correspondents uncounted.

The Conference is being accepted as the world's tribunal. The nations of the earth, small and large, Orient as well as Occident, are presenting their claims to it as to the world's Supreme Bench.

And the biggest subject being discussed is *the League of Nations*. This is of intensest interest. The main purpose is to see that this thing will never happen again, this thing of such a world war. The best brains of men, and the utmost skill and experience, are absorbed in this one noble purpose;—*it mustn't happen again*.

It is fascinating to recall that the Congress of Vienna had just got to this matter, and were planning some sort of a combination of nations to prevent future wars when—Napoleon broke loose again, and every one hurried off to stop him.

The same thing has occurred at intervals through the last three hundred years. Kings, statesmen, publicists, and common folk have studied and written and outlined and proposed on this matter of a League of Nations, but with-

out result. Now the thing seems actually assured. The Peace Conference has adopted the principle, and its leaders are earnestly working out the practical details. And everywhere earnest men pray for their guidance and for success to come to their arduous labours.

It is one of the most striking things in the world outlook to-day. World unity never loomed so big and strong and promising. And yet the situation fairly bristles with difficulties. President Wilson in one of his Italy speeches, speaking of a League of Nations, said that we must get a new international psychology. It may take even more, *a new heart!*

Our own nation's attitude seems nothing short of miraculous. Four short years ago we were still in our traditional, boasted position of isolation from European politics. Now we are practically in fullest alliance with Europe. And our chosen national leader and spokesman is not only taking a leading part in the Conference, but is insisting strenuously on certain radical positions.

And he is clearly succeeding in winning general consent to his leadership in these ideals and plans and action. That such a change could have come would have been reckoned a wild dream; in August of 'Fourteen, the unlikeliest thing imaginable. And at the moment the almost assured probability is that we shall be *in very much deeper* in the family of nations.

This is one most striking thing. It awes the student of God's Word. The spirit of coalition

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among the nations was never so strong nor so near some sort of realization. The world situation seen in the Bible at the crisis time is not a coalition of *all* nations. It is simply a ten-kingdomed coalition or confederacy, later an eight-kingdomed, and it centers in Europe and at the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean—The Jew.

A second thing that catches the eye is not quite so much on the surface, yet not far from it. That is *the distinct drift of the world's trade movement back to the basin of the Mediterranean*. The leadership of the world, and the center of world politics and action has never swung from Europe since Greece ascendancy as a world empire.

But the trade movement, which is in reality the life current of the nations, had a wide swing. Up until the Sixteenth Century the Mediterranean was the world's trade center. With the discovery of the western continents and the great ocean highways, there gradually came a change. Trade moved out across the Atlantic and around the various continental ocean routes.

But since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 the world trade current has swung back to the Mediterranean. The Mediterranean has been spoken of as the world's greatest trade route.

The Euphrates valley is in the swirl of action of the Mediterranean, though not in its drainage

basin. The lure of eastern trade and control has been strong on European statesmen. For a generation Britain has controlled the main water-route, the Mediterranean, through to the Orient. The Mediterranean is practically a British sea, controlled at both of its great extremes, Gibraltar and Suez, by Great Britain.

At its roots the war was a struggle for the control of the Mediterranean trade route. Germany, unable to get into the waterway control, succeeded in "doctoring" Turkey, "the Sick Man of Europe," and pushed her ambition for control of a new route to the East by land.

The Euphrates is on the great highway of trade between Orient and Occident, lying on the edge of both. It seems well authenticated that Napoleon, in the flood of his power, had plans drawn for a city on the Euphrates, from which he could rule East as well as West. The twin valleys of the Tigris-Euphrates have been the world's granary and can be again.

Huge engineering operations there, under one of England's prominent civil engineers, with abundant capital at hand, were under way before the war. With England now in control there, and with the world's cry for food, it would be natural for its development to be pushed. It is not at all out of the probabilities, simply from the general outlook, to see a city of world commerce spring up. That is a second thing of interest on the horizon.

There's a third thing of yet tenser interest,

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the present Jew movement. The movement for renationalization by the Jew is more matured and aggressive at present than it has been at any previous time. It has received the official approval of the British Government. Various commissions are at work making careful, thoroughly digested preparations for establishing the new Jew nation as soon as the necessary official decisions are made.

The Jews of the world fall into three groups religiously, the liberals, the radicals, and the orthodox. The first two seem to have little or no interest in returning to Palestine. Many of them are opposed. They are the minority of the whole Jew population of the world. And most of them are in the United States and England. The attempts at merging the Jew racially is found among these groups.

The big majority of the Jew population class as orthodox, most of whom look for the coming of their Messiah. By far the vast majority of the Jews are poor, pitiable poor. The larger part of them are found in Western Russia and the eastern parts of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Balkans, and adjacent countries. That is to say, the majority of those naturally glad of the opportunity of going to a Jew homeland with full civil and religious rights, are near by Palestine, roughly speaking.

It should be carefully noted that this present Jew movement may not come to a head. The tide may go back on the beach before it rises

again to flood. But it's the highest Jew tide that has risen, thus far.

The Religious Situation.

The fourth item of special interest is *the general Church situation*. In our own country there is a remarkable movement toward Church unity. Steps have been taken on a wide scale in responsible circles toward organic union. And aggressive programs are being planned for practical unity in service on a scale of unprecedented magnitude. Most of this, it is noted, is for extension of effort, while some includes also effort toward intensive toning up of spiritual conditions.

But some thoughtful ones note with much concern the plain drift of things *within* Church circles. Speaking broadly, the dominant notes in the pulpit seem to be patriotism, idealism, Christianity, and the Church, with little proportionately of Jesus Christ and personal devotion to Him, and less of the fact that He was crucified. The old notes of sin, sin's awful result, the imperative need of personal choice of Christ, of being born again, and of the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, these seem missing in increased and increasing degree.

The fact that a man is in a pulpit to-day gives no clue to his belief on certain essentials, *if you don't know* what his beliefs are. I am thinking of such simple essentials as the distinctive inspiration of the Bible, the distinctive solitary

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personality of Jesus blending deity with humanity, the peculiar significance and value of His death as apart from that of any other, the fact of His actual resurrection.

I am thinking of such things as the need of a man's own personal choice as the decisive thing in determining his future, and the heart-breaking final result for the man who insists on shutting or leaving God and Jesus out of his reckonings.

The mere fact that a man is a leading member or an official in a church gives no clue to-day either as to his beliefs on such things, or, be it said thoughtfully and with sore heart, as to his moral character, *if you don't know anything else about him.*

There is plainly a marked increase in thoroughness of organization, in efficiency, in aggressive methods, grouping of statistics and the like. There seems to many a sharp decrease in spirit power, spirit discernment, and spirit atmosphere. It seems very difficult to think that the Holy Spirit is in control of the Church. It does not seem difficult to think that another spirit has got dominance in some instances.

Akin to this there is another marked development, religiously, growing out of the war experiences. It is of a most startling sort. There is a marked increase of *demon activity*. I do not mean to say that it is commonly so recognized. The fact that it is not makes it more deadly.

It has been very natural that the huge num

bers killed in action has caused great concern among their loved ones. The question of immortality has been up all anew. Attempts to communicate with the dead, and the teaching that this can be done, have increased by leaps and bounds.

Such teaching under the various names of spiritualism, spiritism, psychic research, occultism, and the like, has swung to the fore with speed and force, apparently to an unprecedented degree among Church people as well as outside. The literature of the subject, published by reputable houses, has greatly increased.

It should be noted that in all this teaching there is a distinct blurring over, or ignoring of the plain teachings of the Gospel. A man's choice of Christ, or lack of choice, has nothing to do with his future, apparently. The future life is made a sort of vague continuation of the practices and customs common now.

The revelation of God's Word regarding the awful consequences of sin unrepented of, and of the need of the atoning blood of Christ, is quite ignored or positively rejected. It is one of the significant things in the present outlook. And it is more, one of the marks of the world situation at the crisis time.

It would be fascinating to trace other characteristics of the world situation to-day. The speeding up of the wheels everywhere is tremendous. The energy released and fired by the war is finding outlet in commercial life, and will yet

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more. Feverish restlessness in countries most affected by war conditions, and in labour and socialistic circles, was never greater. National debts were never so big, and money never so abundant and free, generally speaking, with some notable exceptions.

Vast enterprises are being talked of. Tunnels under the Dover-Calais Straits, and at Gibraltar, and at the Bosphorus, are being discussed. The possibility of all-rail service from London to Cairo, and down in the Sudanese districts of Central Africa is suggested. And a similar extension of rail service from London across Europe and into far Tokio through Bombay and Peking finds space in the public prints. Without doubt we are on the edge of a time of unprecedented material expansion and prosperity.

The Real Test of Loyalty.

But *moral conditions* commonly, what shall be said there? Continental standards of morality are quite distinct from British and American. As one crosses the English Channel from the Continent he is impressed with the fact that England has a conscience on morals. It would be quite natural if there had been a further loosening up of standards on the Continent during the war, despite wise attempts at restraint. All that comes sifting in colours such possibility.

It makes one sore at heart to note the swift extension of continental standards of morality

westward. A generation ago London set the standards of life in New York, notably in men's dress, and commonly. Now continental standards dominate its life. Any one who knows continental fiction will know just how.

But the matters of special note in this present connection are those four outstanding things first named. And they should be noted carefully, and only that one may pray more intelligently and understand more clearly. One should be very chary of mere speculation. There is the unmistakable acid test to apply in attempting to sense the world situation.

That is the Jew; when the Jew actually re-nationalizes, and when further he makes a seven-year treaty with some king at the head of a coalition, that is the unfailing mark by which to identify things. That fixes a certain group of events. And it marks the limits of time within which the crisis and the Christ and the Kingdom will come.

Meanwhile it should be carefully noted that the whole emphasis of the Book is on living a true life in one's daily round, true to Christ, to one's fellows, and to the common tasks.

A Cambridge University man whose duty called him to service in the trenches in France made a keen remark. He was speaking of the strain of trench life, the awful tense strain. He said, "There are three imperatives in the trench: food, work, and a comrade."

The war has imposed severe discipline. It has

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touched all our life very closely, food, fuel, clothing, travel, time of rising and going to bed, and so on almost endlessly. Everywhere the severest economies have been enforced. It has affected one's speech. A few words must be added here and there to make loyalty quite clear in the tenser air of war times. There has been a good bit of complaint.

But this sort of thing is nothing new to the true follower of Christ. He has known war experiences of this sort long before the war came, and will on through peace days. He that insists on living true to Christ in a sane, clear, full way will know some sore experiences.¹ Trench life is not so new to him. He will appreciate the three imperatives of actual trench life in France.

There needs to be the quiet time daily off alone with the Master over His Word. So food comes for heart and brain and life. So there come the clearer understanding, the purer heart, the straight life, the warm sympathetic touch with others, and above all the keeping true in all of this to the Man who died.

And there needs to be the steady faithful doing of one's allotted task. There is no finer test of fidelity to our Lord Jesus than in being true to the common task in the corner where He has put us.

And there must be a comrade. There is the unseen, ever-present Comrade. Jesus lived down here, partly, to be a comrade with us. He sent

¹ 2 Timothy 3:12.

His other Self, the Holy Spirit, to be our constant Comrade. And the closer our comradeship with Him, the truer will be our comradeship with our fellows. And we all need human comradeship to keep us human and sane and sweet and poised.

And so with food, and work, and a comrade we shall hold true through the days of strain and stress, intelligently, patiently, sympathetically true to Him who died, and to our fellows, and to our world. And so we hasten the better day that's surely coming.

Appendix

Notes on the "any moment," or "secret rapture" teaching.

Most premillennialists seem to hold to the teaching, which is variously described as the "any moment" theory, the "secret rapture," and the "pre-tribulation rapture" theory. Briefly, in the main, the teaching is that our Lord's return, so far as His followers are concerned, may occur *at any moment*, that it will be *secret* in that there will be no outer evidence of His having returned, except the strange unexplained disappearance of followers. And that this will occur *before* the tribulation or persecution. And this conception has quite taken hold of the heart and imagination of those accepting it. Some rarely sweet poems, and imagined incidents, have been based upon it.

It is interesting and instructive to trace the origin of this bit of teaching. There seems to be no trace of it in any literature previous to about eighty years ago. It seems to have arisen with a notable London preacher, Edward Irving, and to have gotten its wide circulation and acceptance through a chief leader in England of the Plymouth Brethren, John N. Darby.

Edward Irving was an earnest godly Scottish

minister, of impressive presence, with unusual gifts in oratory, and a deep emotional nature. He drew great and influential crowds in the two London churches he served, the Caledonian Church in Hatton Square, and the National Scotch Church of Regent Square.

But the closing years of his short intense career (he died at forty-two) were marked by loss of popularity, and his expulsion from church connections. He developed vagaries of teaching, especially regarding supernatural gifts and eschatological subjects. The suggestions that Christians would be caught away secretly, and before the tribulation, so escaping its sore experiences, and that this might occur at any moment, seem to have originated with him during those closing years.

These points of teaching were taken up by Darby. John N. Darby was a man of deep piety, fine presence, and marked gifts of leadership and speech. His influence among the Plymouth Brethren was very great, not only extending their following among the people, but dominating their teaching and worship. Among those whom he won was the famous English scholar, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles. Darby gave such prominence to this particular teaching of Irving's that it was definitely incorporated in the group of premillennial teachings.

But Dr. Tregelles took exception to it, not only as not being taught in Scripture, but as being contrary to the Scripture. He wrote a

pamphlet¹ in which he traced the teaching through Darby back to Irving. With his scholarly mastery of the original text, and his inexorable logic, he laid bare the fallacies involved. He insisted on the true Scripture teaching, that the second coming of our Lord would be quite apparent to all in both of its phases, that the Church would witness through the tribulation, and that certain unmistakable outward signs would indicate the approach of Christ. But Darby's insistent dominance as a leader had already given the Irving view an established place among his followers, and so commonly among premillennialists.

There used to be a well-known prophetic conference that met yearly at Niagara-on-the-Lake in Canada. It broke up about twenty years ago. The real reason for its discontinuance was the growing belief among certain leaders there that the "any moment" teaching was not Scriptural. And so the conference fell apart.

Certain able scholars, habitually in attendance, pointed out the true Scripture teaching. It is interesting that there is no passage of Scripture that speaks, directly or indirectly, of the *secrecy* of the rapture.

¹ "The Hope of Christ's Second Coming," by S. P. Tregelles, LL. D., published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., London.

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